

S E R M O N S

ON

I M P O R T A N T

A N D

INTERESTING SUBJECTS.

By PERCIVAL STOCKDALE.

K

Posteris an aliqua cura nostrī, nescio. Nos certē meremur ut sit aliqua. Non dico, ingenio; id enim superbum; sed studio; sed labore; sed reverentiā posterūm.

PLINY'S EPISTLES.

L O N D O N:
PRINTED FOR JOHN STOCKDALE,
OPPOSITE
BURLINGTON-HOUSE, PICCADILLY.
MDCCLXXXIV.

SERMONS

ON

IMPORTANT

AND

INTERESTING SUBJECTS



BY PERCIVAL STOCKDALE.

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L O N D O N

PRINTED FOR JOHN STOCKDALE,

OPPOSITE

THE NEWINGTON HOUSE, NEWINGTON, S.E.

MDCCLXXXIV

—A

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
WILLIAM PITT.

SIR,

IN literary enterprize, there is, sometimes, a high spirit of honourable adventure, which rises far above timid or affected modesty, yet keeps as distinctly clear of the confines of arrogance and presumption. It can only be comprehended and exemplified by minds which are delicate, as well as ardent. By this spirit, I flatter myself, that I am at present actuated. While it disdains both the Language and the Patrons of ordinary Dedication, it has been so long instructed

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structed and modelled by many salutary,
 but painful documents of experience, that
 I hope it will not, now, be justly accused
 of indecorum, either on account of it's
 object, or from the strain of it's exertion.
 True and virtuous ambition never plays
 the hypocrite and the slave; for it's ends
 are never unwarrantable. Mine, I own,
 is strong; and it's aim is noble: it has
 long been indefatigable and invincible,
 in aspiring to the laurel of intellectual
 merit. But, as in the severe school of Ad-
 versity, I have been gradually detached
 from unreasonable desires; from the love
 of extravagant pleasures, and splendid ex-
 ternals, I am in no danger of adopting
 that inordinate and unprincipled ambition,
 which, when it is gratified, often proves
 equally

equally prejudicial to a community, and to the individual whom it inflamed.

THE distinguishing and liberal Reader will allow, that I feel that generous spirit of enterprize to which I have just referred; that noble pride which a literary character ought never to relinquish; and that I maintain a proper veneration of sacred truth, when it is publicly known, that I have taken the liberty to adorn and dignify this Volume with the illustrious and immortal Name of PITT.

IT seems now incumbent on me to acquaint you, Sir, and the world, why the following Discourses, at a vacant hour, may not be unworthy of your attention,

A

You

You will naturally suppose, that in my own judgement, these Sermons, in some degree, deserve the honour of your perusal; though they will not be recommended to you by national partiality, nor by those vulgar arts, by that ostentatious panegyrick, which have, of late, remarkably disgraced the Republic of Letters. He who makes a serious appeal to *your* literary decision, in a style which a sycophant would tremble to use, can never acknowledge a mean opinion of his abilities, and application, without being guilty of hypocrisy, and of more criminal ingratitude to Heaven. There is an ethereal principle within us, whose calm, but articulate whispers, if we give them a fair hearing, are oracular, next to the immediate voice of God; and so vigorous is it's flame, in active
and

and determined minds, that it is not to be deadened, it is not to be repelled, by the most oppressive and mortifying calamities of accident, or persecution. It's dictates and it's energies are the same, whether it be in fashion or unpopular; whether it be in adversity or success. Distresses cannot make it forget the prerogatives of it's nature; nay, they make it assert them with more alertness and ardour; as a rude external pressure gives a more forcible spring to material elasticity. The violence of the assault is almost compensated by the superiority which we feel in the action of resistance. If there was not a secret sense of pleasure; a secret sense of triumph, in our intrepid and persevering conflicts with fortune, how could the ingenuous mind often endure, through life, her capricious and tyrannical hostilities !

THE ruling motive to which these Compositions owe their origin, give them some desert, and embolden their Authour to send them into the world, under the auspices of Mr. PITT. I was not stimulated to write them either by interest or by vanity. While I devoted my time to them, my faculties were not invigorated, and brightened, by the sanguine hopes of preferment, nor by the flattering consciousness that they were immediately intended for an elegant congregation. I was determined that they should occupy a solitary part of my life, merely that I might be well employed; that I might procure to myself, at least, an equivalent to agreeable circumstances, in satisfaction of mind.—What I have now asserted, may be demonstrated by my precarious and humble situations;

situations ; otherwise I should be ashamed for saying so much to my own advantage, to *your* penetration and knowledge of the world.

I LIKEWISE dedicate these Sermons to *you*, Sir, because I am sure I am requesting for them a Patron whose character reflects honour on his high station ; and who is worthy of the Religion which they endeavour to inculcate. Though you might have recourse to the strongest pleas that dissipation and folly can urge in their defence ; the meridian of youth ; conspicuous birth, talents, and power ; the means and incentives of our metropolis to the gratification of every irregular wish ; those prescriptive privileges, which, with the prejudiced and unthinking majority

of mankind, authorize the licentious indulgence of the juvenile passions ; yet you are a great adept in the most excellent, in the sublimest of human arts, that of self-government ;—you consecrate your time to temperance and study ; to the zealous and invariable practice of private and publick virtue. Your eloquence is a counterpart to your life ; luminous, not glaring ; ardent, without asperity. Thus your mind is actuated by our best ambition ; you warmly and steddily pursue the noblest ends of our existence. And thus the Sovereign, in conferring on *you* his most distinguished favours, diffuses it's brightest lustre around terrestrial majesty ; by acting with a determined and inflexible Obedience to the MAJESTY OF HEAVEN,

CAN a friend or a foe propose to me a more apposite Protector of Discourses on Christian Morality; on that morality which far excells the systems of the most virtuous and celebrated sages of Antiquity; on that morality, whose uniformly generous, amiable, and salutary tenets, evince the divinity of it's Authour!

THIS honest encomium I am proud thus openly to pay; for it excites no ingenuous remorse, on the severest reflection. And I am confident, that the character of the Man will exempt me from the charge of adulation to the Minister. He who accuses my Dedication of flattery, will bring a more atrocious impeachment against his own heart; he will brand it

with groundless and most virulent malevolence.

WHILE I am closing my Dedication, my views are expanded and comprehensive; they are directed to Beings of this, and a better world. I already enjoy, in thought, your willing acceptance of this Address; which, as you possess great benevolence, is, certainly, no extravagant supposition. Methinks, the awful shade of a Father is pleased with this sincere tribute to his Son; and the GENIUS OF BRITAIN seems to ratify it with HIS approbation.

As the pleasures of a Poet are extremely circumscribed, I know that your humanity will forgive me the luxuriance of imagination. Even a selfish and parsimoni-

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ous world, when fortune spreads around us
the horrors of perpetual Winter, would,
surely, not preclude from us an Elysium
of our own formation.

I am,

S I R,

With great Respect,

Your most obedient,

And most humble Servant,

PERCIVAL STOCKDALE.

L O N D O N, }
April 8, 1784. }

(111)

one would be when fortune spreads around
the horrors of perpetual Winter, would
fancy not exclude from us an element
of our own foundation.

I am,

S R

With Great Respect,

26th Dec 1844

And most humble Servant,

PERCIVAL STOCKDALE

London
Dec 21 1844

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S E R-

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(xviii)

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"your wrath."

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of strength to mingle strong drink.

S E R M O N I.

ON PROSPERITY AND ADVERSITY.

JOB, CHAPTER I. PART OF VERSE 9TH. —

—DOETH JOB FEAR GOD FOR NAUGHT

THESE words are a part of the answer which Satan, the great enemy of mankind, gave to God, whose divine benevolence had been representing the almost unparalleled virtue, and piety of his servant Job. *Doth Job, said our spiritual adversary, fear God for naught? Put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath; and he will curse thee to thy face, v. 11.* I need not tell you what an admirable example Job hath left us, both

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in

in affluence and in misery :—that as he was most eminently humane, generous, and gratefully attentive to his Creator, in the one, he was most memorably patient, and resigned to the will of Heaven in the other. Nor need I inform you, that the expression of *fearing God*, is often, and with good reason, substituted, in scripture, for all active virtue. When we have fixed, and when we constantly entertain in our minds, a rational, that is, a truly religious fear of God, all the excellent qualities and habits, of which our nature is capable, rise to a mature and durable growth : But without that fear, we always find, on impartial examination, that the boasted virtues of the human race are very defective, languid, and inconsistent.

I intend, in this Discourse, to offer to your consideration, some objects, which, I hope, you will not think foreign to my text, nor to the history of Job. I intend to show what effects prosperity and adversity

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verſity generally have, and what effects
 they *ought* to have, on the human mind.
 I ſhall ſurvey my ſubject in its moral, ac-
 tual, and permanent view. My obſerva-
 tions on the conſequences of good and
 bad fortune to human nature, ſhall
 not be confined and invidious. They
 ſhall be as extenſive as time and the world;
 they ſhall be applicable to all ages and
 nations; they ſhall be applicable to man-
 kind; to our ſpecies, indefinitely; to the
 aggregate of human beings. Hence, I
 ſhall bring to my preſent employment,
 ſome fair and honourable advantages: It
 will be allowed by people of the leaſt
 candour, to be free from prejudice, and
 partiality; it will eſcape the cenſure, and
 the odium, of any perſonal implication
 and fatire; a cowardly, and malicious uſe,
 to which I am ſorry to know, that the
 pulpit is ſometimes prostituted, by thoſe
 who never deſerve to have the honour of
 addreſſing a reſpectable audience from this
 reſpectable place. Hence, too, more ex-

tent and dignity will be given to moral, and important truth; and hence I shall show the comprehensive design of christianity; the necessity of that institution, and its all-sufficiency, if seriously adopted, and strenuously obeyed, to direct and animate our lives; to regulate enjoyment, and to alleviate distress;—hence I shall universally apply its universal laws. For by calling religion to my aid, that sacred and powerful auxiliary, I shall evince and ratify my moral theory:—It was for the sake of *religion*, and with an humble endeavour, in some degree, to strengthen *its* influence, that I meditated and planned this discourse; which, without that laudable and salutary aim, I should have thought a vain and idle speculation. It is by the christian scheme alone, that we can fully and satisfactorily account for the extreme inequalities of fortune, and situation, in this world; and without the generous fortitude and activity which are enjoined us; without the comforts which
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are afforded, and the rewards which are promised us, by that scheme, those inequalities, to a feeling and thinking mind, would be dreadful and intolerable. In short, we shall find, that only by never suffering the eye of the mind to lose sight of a state of future retribution, the fortunate can be equally and constantly preserved from insolence and licentiousness; and the unfortunate, from despondency and rapine.

I should wish, as I proceed, to be accurate, and clear in my ideas and expressions myself; and to have them justly, and perspicuously apprehended by those who hear me. If I should be asked what is prosperity, and what is adversity, the question would not be absurd; if we recollect our almost infinitely different situations in life;—the unexpected and contrasted shiftings of the sublunary scenes, which the poet calls, *the various turns of chance below*; and the no less various opinions of mankind, concerning good and evil, from

the infinitely diversified constitutions, and habitudes of their minds : The question, however, it is not my business, at present, to resolve, by a minute and philosophical disquisition. Under the terms, prosperity and adversity, I mean only to couch those ideas which are affixed to their obvious and common acceptation. I shall make prosperity one of those bright and envied situations in a highly polished country, in which, either by constant and prescriptive tenure, or by one of the sudden and capricious whirls of fortune, we enjoy the elegances and the luxuries, the varieties, and the plumage of life.—By adversity, I mean that extreme penury to which many people are destined, from the cradle to the grave ; that cruel war with famine and the elements, and with the scorn and taunts of more unmerciful man, which they are obliged to maintain ;—that lethargic and stagnant state of mere animal existence in human life, in which the mind is never suffered to expand and flourish,

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flourish, but all its transcendant faculties are locked up in a perpetual frost;—or, that unrelenting train of disappointments and mortifications, which persecute and shock our self-love and our pride; or which deeply wound our better and more tender affections. Or, adversity, as I shall use the word, signifies another distressful species of human destiny, and perhaps the hardest and most tormenting of the three;—an eligible and agreeable situation, contrasted with one that is mean and painful; our banishment from affluence and society, to poverty and obscurity. In this abrupt, and opposite exchange of situation, we feel almost a new, dreary, and horrible mode of existing; which it is impossible for us to support with serenity and grace, unless we are armed with the panoply of christian philosophy;—especially if the mind of the sufferer is warm and sentimental; if it is peculiarly formed by nature to enjoy the charms of civilized, enlightened, and po-

S E R M O N I.

lished life ; but hath been unfortunately thrown out of its orbit, by the violent workings of the apparent chaos of sub-lunary events.

These are my definitions of prosperity and adversity ; and I intend that they shall run parallel with my following arguments, observations, and descriptions.

When we talk of *bearing* adversity, we have the idea of bearing a load, or oppression :—When *bearing* prosperity is our expression, the word *bear* has a very different import ; it conveys an image analogous to that strength of head, which bears the power of wine without intoxication. Adversity particularly demands fortitude and patience ; prosperity, watchfulness and resolution.

It is a common remark ; it is almost a proverb ; that it is more difficult to bear prosperity than adversity. For this observation we have to thank the inattention and barbarity of mankind, whose observations are, in general, superficial ;
and

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and who seem strenuous to promote insensibility to the condition, and to the merit of the poor. The rich are not satisfied with being often industrious to obtrude on the minds of the miserable, a melancholy comparison, by the display of pomp, and the air of dominion; they must likewise aggravate their calamities with insolent nonsense, which hypocritically assumes the garb of primitive, and apostolick consolation:—They tell them, that they have an easier part to act in life than themselves. With equal propriety might they assert, that it is more agreeable to wear a chain than a bracelet; or that the current of life flows more briskly on a mountain of Siberian snow, than in a blooming Italian arbour, enlivened with the genial influence of the sun, and with the music of the choristers of the spring.

An objection may here arise in the breast of a candid, equitable, and friendly, but an unwary critick: He may tacitly appeal to facts; he would tell me that they
disprove

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disprove my present theory ; for that we are as apt to forget our moral and christian duty, in prosperity, as in adversity ; and therefore, that it is, at least, as *difficult* to act well in the former as in the latter state. I am an enemy to all visionary theories ; and wish to see every respectable truth demonstrated by multiplied examples ; by the unchangeable laws of nature, and by the well-known course of the world. I readily grant, because I am thoroughly convinced, that there is more misconduct among the wealthy and the powerful, than among those who are in straitened circumstances. This opinion, I flatter myself, I have formed from accurate and dispassionate observation ; I am sure, not from any envy with which I have been struck by wealth and grandeur ; which, if I was stupid, and pitiful enough to entertain, I should suppress it here. But still I deny that it is *more difficult* for the rich than for the indigent, to act their part with moral propriety

priety and dignity. If I seem paradoxical and unintelligible, I now beg leave to assert, what I shall afterwards endeavour to illustrate; that *difficulty* has, in general, nothing to do with the conduct of those who enjoy the most propitious smiles of fortune; that the word, and its idea, should be expunged from those descriptions which characterise the manners of the affluent and the great.

Were a rational and good being to come among us, from some better sphere; and were he told that one part of the human race enjoyed all that was desirable in nature and in art; that they were blessed with all possible affluence and delicacies; but that the other, and by far the greater part, pined in want, and were galled with all the asperities of life: This benevolent being would immediately conclude, that the rich and powerful were ever anxious and diligent to relieve the miseries of their brethren; of beings formed, in body and in mind, exactly like themselves.

selves. He would immediately conclude, that when a perishable mortal sat down, in the extreme inclemency of the season, to a ducal repast, surrounded with all those objects that charm the senses and the imagination; our amiable stranger would conclude, that he would sometimes, at least, recollect his unhappy neighbour, shivering with cold, and stung with hunger, and that on the recollection, a noble sickness would seize his appetite; his splendour would grow dim around him; and the tear of humanity and fraternal love, would glisten in his eye.

The very reverse of this supposition is the fact; and it shows us how cautious we should be, not to form serious propositions without solid foundations; not to discredit the little knowledge that we can acquire, with ostentatious pretensions to knowledge. It shows us the futility of the aspiring arguments *a priori*, when compared with the substantial evidence which results from experience.

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Let us now more particularly observe the effects which prosperity and adversity usually produce in human nature; and what effects they *ought* to produce in us, as men and christians.

The man of rank and fortune has the most powerful incitements to the most generous conduct, and to every great and laudable enterprize. The very nourishment with which he is supported, tends to make him capable of magnanimous action: For while the body and mind are united, they will constantly and intimately sympathize. And though all intemperance ultimately weakens and deadens both our external and intellectual frame, yet the moderate and proper use of generous sustenance dilates the heart and mind, and gives elasticity and vigour to the whole man. He has every opportunity to acquire useful and elegant knowledge; to shine in public or in private life. Then, if he excels in virtue, or in talents, he is sure to be rewarded with honourable and extended fame; with the
applause

applause of a nation, which is certainly a strong incentive to noble deeds. For in one circumstance he resembles the apostles of Christ: He is as *a city that is set on a hill*; therefore, his good qualities and acquirements *cannot be hid*, Matth. c. v. v. 14. By what cogent restraints, too, is he prevented from habituating himself to that intemperance and licentiousness, which indispose us from all liberal and worthy conduct; ruin health, and are an uncharitable and destructive example to the lower orders of society; if he seriously considers, that it is in *his* power to make all the true comforts, and pleasures of life, the concomitants of his existence! How amply is he empowered to perform acts of charity and beneficence; if he could be but persuaded to take the path to true happiness; if he but once felt the exalted pleasure of doing good! He might wipe tears from many eyes, and stimulate the energy of many an ethereal mind, without contracting the becoming splendour of his station;

station ; without relinquishing *one* genuine enjoyment. What a friend to the welfare and order of society would he be ; what a friend to religion ; if he *visited the fatherless, and widows in their affliction* ; if he soothed their grief, and supplied their indigence ; if he invited unfortunate genius and virtue, from poverty and obscurity, to *his* protection, and gave them their proper place and dignity. If he made *these* most amiable and noble actions the great objects of his life, what angelic raptures would he feel ; and what raptures of joy and gratitude would he communicate to mankind !—*He*, whose very bow is benignity, whose smile is meritorious !

But alas ! this is all hypothesis ! a pleasing picture, but not drawn from the life ; it bears not the least similitude to the moral lineaments of the rich, and of *titular* nobility. The wealthy and the great, unfortunately for their real and durable happiness, are not trained to think. We
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are strongly solicited by our natural propensity to pleasure: Hence they are precipitated into intemperance and excess; and they soon contract those habits of sensuality which accompany them through life; because they reflect not on their dreadful consequences. It would be unjust, indeed, to make Bacchanalian intemperance a general characteristick of the men of fashion of these times. The enjoyment of the bottle is too rough and violent a pleasure for modern effeminacy. But that invaluable time which would be devoted to ebriety, is as despicably and odiously prostituted to the infernal spirit of gaming, which rages more than ever in this island; and to the lighter scenes of infantine amusement, which have, of late, been extravagantly multiplied in our metropolis, by the rapacious panders to idleness and vice, to attract our languid and feverish minds, tired with past, yet eager for new follies. Can we suppose that they who are engrossed by
this

this most infamous trade, and by these frivolous entertainments can *submit* (can submit did I say, can *aspire*) to that liberal application which is requisite, if we mean to make a manly progress in literature and science? We commonly sit down with great reluctance to rational composition and to thought. The human mind, even when habituated to intellectual achievements, often retires, not without some difficulty, from the objects of sense, from the trifles of the day; concentrates itself in itself, and there performs those beautiful and wonderful operations which become the monuments of genius, the admiration of ages. Can we suppose, then, that *they* whose manners I have been describing, will ever have resolution enough to combat and to conquer the pain which always attends the commencement of close application? They, who by their indolence and other fatal indulgences, have reduced themselves to the helpless state of a second childhood, in the prime and maturity of

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life :

life:—Who cannot walk from one street to another, nor put on their own cloaths?

Their obduracy to the distresses of the bodies and minds of the unfortunate would be incredible, if it was not notorious from every day's experience. For though England is famous for what we call its *charitable* endowments, I will venture to assert (however unpopular may be the sound of the assertion) that we owe those endowments, in a very small degree, to true christian charity, or the love of our neighbour. They are the benign effects of selfish causes. One rich man subscribes a certain sum to one of these foundations, because another rich man has subscribed the same sum; or perhaps he gives a few guineas more than his rival in wealth and show, that he may purchase a triumph for his vanity. Or, we may be indebted for his contribution to a prudent and cautious motive; he may recollect, that by the institution of the work-house or hospital, for which his generosity is solicited, the
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number of the idle and the vagrant will be diminished, and consequently that his property will be more secure from thieves and robbers. Not one in a thousand of the rich and great, dispense their charity in any of the ways which I have mentioned and recommended, and which are the genuine consequences of paternal and fraternal, of christian, and universal love. The behaviour, indeed, of the luxurious and the gay, when accosted by a person in distress, if they even know that he is a good man, and in *real* distress, is terrible to relate. The very * sight of him of-

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fends

* Soit que les hommes soient naturellement cruels, toutes les fois qu' ils peuvent l'être impunément ; soit que les riches, et les puissants regardent la misère comme un reproche de leur bonheur ; soit enfin, qu' ils veuillent se soustraire aux demandes importunes des malheureux ; il est certain qu' ils maltraitent presque toujours le misérable. La vue de l'infortuné fait sur la plupart des hommes l'effet de la tête de Méduse : à son aspect, les cœurs se changent en rocher.

Helvetius ; De L'Esprit : Discours, III. Chap. XIV,

“ Whether the human species are naturally cruel

“ when,

sends them, and hardens them against his misery. They are thus affected, partly from a false delicacy, which is shocked with a view of the appendages of poverty, and partly because his eloquent and remonstrating wants, severely reprimand them

“ whenever they can exercise cruelty with impunity;
 “ or whether the rich and powerful feel the misery
 “ of their fellow-creatures a reproach to *them*, for
 “ engrossing the enjoyments of life to themselves;
 “ or whether they are offended with the importunity
 “ of the distressed; it is certain, that calamity is al-
 “ most constantly aggravated by barbarous treat-
 “ ment. The sight of an unfortunate person has
 “ the effect of Medusa’s head on the human heart;
 “ it turns it to stone.”

The same great master of human nature adds, in a note on this passage :

La moindre faute qu’il [le malheureux] fait est un pretexte suffisant pour lui refuser tout secours: on veut que les malheureux soient parfaits.

“ Of the least fault which is committed by a
 “ person in distress, we make a sufficient reason, for
 “ refusing him any assistance. Perfection is re-
 “ quired of the unfortunate.”

them for the monstrous advantages which *they* have over *him* in this life; and for their shameful insensibility to human woe.

Such are, in general, through life, the morals of the favourites of fortune. Some of them, indeed, intimidated by a long and dangerous malady, turn external and mechanical proselytes to religion. Their piety is worthy of its origin; a mistaken fear of the Deity; not a rational, filial, and practical, but a gloomy, and servile fear. They now attend the service of the Church, with a surprizing punctuality and decency; but have as little in them as ever, of the spirit and efficacy of Christianity; and are still cold and parsimonious in acts of benevolence. As *this* world grows flat and joyless to them, they are anxious to obtain Heaven; and to secure their momentous aim, they have recourse to a legerdemain, and hackneyed ingenuity. They bequeath all, or the greater part of their fortune, to charitable uses. Thus, they dotingly

and impiously imagine, that they cheat three infinitely different Beings, and that they serve themselves, to eternity. I tremble while I mention these Beings in the same period: I hope I mention them with proper distinction and awe. They cheat some selfish and eager expectant, who anticipates the possession of their estate: They fancy they cheat the devil, whose standard they have deserted in good and critical time; and their audacity must fancy that they cheat God too, as they think they gain Heaven without the expence of one virtue or of one farthing: For wealth is annihilated to a man as soon as he is dead.

From this view of the manners of the wealthy and the noble, it appears that *difficulty* and *they*, as I have already observed, are in general totally unacquainted with each other. They collect not their minds, they do not estimate the different value of sublunary objects, they resist not the impulse of the moment; they glide securely down the delusive stream that
bears

bears them to the gulph of destruction. If they had the resolution to endure but a moderate conflict with themselves, would they not effectually determine to observe the laws of temperance, and to seize every opportunity of performing judicious and salutary acts of benevolence?—A prudent and a noble strain of conduct! which would be so far from diminishing and restraining, that it would multiply and augment their pleasures. We have been taking a humiliating view of human nature; let us turn to its heroical characteristicks, and assert with good authority, that when it is brought, or when it brings itself to the test, it will perform a thousand times more arduous deeds than those which I have just been proposing to the rich and the great. Therefore, though they certainly *bear* or *use* prosperity very ill, we cannot from their immediate conduct infer, whether or no it is *difficult* to act well in good fortune; for they will not encounter *any difficulty*.

If I did not now offer to your consideration those particulars with which we ought to soften our censures on the rich and powerful, I should think that I deserved the imputation of prejudice and malignity. In extenuation of their misconduct, let us then reflect, that when we have all our wants and conveniences supplied, all the means of pleasure procured for us without any care or industry of our own, we are apt to be indolent and supine; we are apt to avoid all action of body or mind, that produces not some *immediate* gratification. Such is the epicurean genius of mankind; and it is only to be conquered by virtuous effort and vigorous perseverance. Let us likewise reflect, that most of the generous throes of the human soul, that most of its glorious enterprizes and achievements, have arisen from the hard and imperious, but important and decisive command of necessity. Let us consider too, that people of high rank and large fortunes continue ignorant,
not

not only from their own mental inactivity, but that they are industriously kept in ignorance by their dependents, companions, and pretended friends. These interested and artful besiegers of the great, find their schemes promoted by keeping their patron unacquainted with salutary truth; and that the soft language of submission and homage are most grateful to his ears; for the superficiality of his knowledge, and his high opinion of his own merit (a weed that shoots most luxuriantly in barren minds) will not suffer him to distinguish between selfish adulation and honest encomium. And since the misconduct which I have exhibited, is the misconduct of the great majority of those on whom Providence hath bestowed a superabundance of the good things of this world; let all of us to whom heaven hath assigned very limited possessions, instead of indulging envy and malignant censure, join in a liberal sympathy with the infirmities of the human frame. Let us check the confidence that
each

each of us is too apt to entertain, that we could acquit ourselves with propriety and decorum, in *any* situation; let us rather suspect, since we see so many victims to the profuse and intoxicating gifts of Mammon, that *we* too should sink under his auspices, in ignorance, indolence, and inglorious luxury. And let us never dwell particularly on the defects, the faults, and extravagances of the great, but from a laudable, and it is to be hoped, not a romantic wish, to weaken their prevalence in *some* degree; *never*, but as Brutus conspired against Cæsar, *with a noble general view, and common good to all*. Nor let us ungenerously and ungratefully forget, that among the possessors of wealth and power, in every highly cultivated community, there have been exceptions to this general depravity; that some happy favourites of virtue and of God, have emancipated themselves from the filken fetters of ease and pleasure, and have shone forth, illustrious examples of private and of public virtue.

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S E R M O N II.

ON PROSPERITY AND ADVERSITY.

JOB, CHAPTER I. PART OF VERSE 9TH.

—DOTH JOB FEAR GOD FOR NAUGHT?

I SHALL now consider the situation and conduct of the poor; how they *bear* adversity, and how they *ought* to act under that severe oppression. Their history is not so extensive and complicated as that of the rich; therefore its essential facts may be contained in a short abstract.

The poor man's objects of duty, like his powers of action, are few; yet perhaps not so easy to be practised, as they are often pronounced to be by indolence and insensibility. The domestic and social affections, temperance, honesty, industry, resignation to the will of Heaven, and a conscientious attendance on the public worship, comprize
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his moral and religious system. To the domestic affections and obligations, the poor are more faithful than people in elevated stations. The delusive and glittering charms of vice are not displayed for *them*; she does not incite them by her meretricious and inexhaustible arts, to a criminal variety and to a ruinous expence. To their neighbour and their friend, they will not make so many, nor so fluent and polite speeches as the hypocrites of elegant life; but they will do more to serve them than the latter. They cannot serve them with money or with power; but on any emergency, they will commonly be liberal to them of their personal attendance and labour. Their benevolence toward one another is not so much impaired, as it is in the higher orders of society, by competitions of interest or vanity. Yet it must be owned, that these good offices proceed more from good nature, from an unpremeditated and impassive flexibility of temper, than from warm sentiment or

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a conscientious discharge of duty. Fortunately for those whom I am now describing, their sensations and their sensibility are not exquisitely fine; if they were, how could they, in a mere *moral* view of human destiny, *suffer being here below*? Coarse and unenlivening sustenance, hard labour, few ideas, a sameness of existence, give moderate feelings to the *poor*.—Causes which, on a superficial view, one should suppose, would mollify the soul—power, homage, wealth, pleasure, form the obduracy of the *great*.

Persons in low circumstances are not so steadily temperate as many who enjoy a happier fortune. Their feasts, their gay hours, are few and accidental; therefore, they too precipitately obey the dictates of the exhilarating moment. Past fatigue, and cold and hunger, give a zest to the rustic board; animate obstreperous mirth, and banish modesty and sobriety. Undoubtedly they deserve to be blamed for their temporary excels and licentiousness.

If

If temperance presided over their convivial pleasures, for those pleasures they would have no forfeit of pure and unclouded health to pay to nature: They would return to their labour with more alacrity; their nerves would be better strung, and their minds would be more serene and chearful. I envy not, however, the firmness of the censor, whose disapprobation of these revels is not softened with great lenity and indulgence.

It sometimes too unquestionably happens, that a person of low degree has a great natural delicacy and force of mind. Such a man may forget his humble acquiescence in the situation allotted to him by his Creator; he may despise the dreary and circumscribed orbit in which he is obliged to move; he may catch a *baleful fire* at the sight of elegance which he cannot obtain; he may spurn his manual drudgery, and abandon himself, in a species of despair, to low dissipation. But his extravagances and debaucheries he cannot
long

long maintain. The calls of absolute indigence he feels irresistible : He invades property, and dies an ignominious death. In our estimate of human merit and demerit, we lose sight of all rational and moral distinctions ; and our tenderness to a public criminal, if by his station and dexterity he but eludes the justice of the law, rises with the enormity of his guilt. The rigorous fate of the petty villain is not softened with one tear of pity ; his retribution is a halter. The plunder of a nation is rewarded with a garter, with the insignia by which our generous and magnanimous Edward was * distinguished.

But

* Le conquerant, dit le corsaire Demetrius à Alexandre, est un homme, qui, à la tête de cent mille autres, vole, à la fois, cent mille bourses, égorge cent mille citoyens ; fait en grand, le mal que le brigand fait en petit ; et qui, plus injuste que ce dernier, est plus nuisible à la société. Le voleur est l'effroi du particulier. Le conquerant est, comme le despote, le fléau d'une nation. Qui détermine notre respect pour les Alexandres, les Cortés ; et notre mépris pour les Cartouches les Raf-fats ? La puissance des uns, et l'impuissance des autres.

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But it is far from being my intention to sacrifice truth to a mistaken and unjust compassion for the poor. The lower degrees of life abound with base characters, who seem, from native disposition, from the

Dans le brigand, ce n'est pas proprement le crime, mais la foiblesse qu'on meprise.

“ The conqueror, said Demetrius the pirate, to Alexander, is a destructive adventurer, who, at the head of an hundred thousand men, takes an hundred thousand purses by one fortunate encounter, butchers a hundred thousand people, perpetrates that kind of evil with immense effect, which is committed by the robber in detail, and who, as he is more unjust than the latter, is more injurious to society. The robber is dreaded by individuals ; the conqueror, like the tyrant, is the terror of a nation. Why do we admire an Alexander and a Cortez, and despise a Cartouche and a Raffiat ? Because Alexander and Cortez had great, Cartouche and Raffiat little power. We affix infamy to the robber, on account of his weakness, not on account of his crimes.”

Helvetius ; de l'Homme, Chap. Xth.

A muchos les parece bastante para acometer cualquier maldad, el deseo de reynar.

“ Many people think that an ambition for empire authorizes any crime.”

Mariana's. History of Spain.

the years of infancy to have been the slaves of vice ; and who at length perpetrate those daring crimes which are highly injurious to society, and in the end prove fatal to themselves. By native disposition, I here mean an inexplicable formation of the man, on which bad impressions and habits, if they are not carefully avoided, and strenuously combated, gain a very early and a peculiarly strong and durable influence. Ingratitude, in return for kind and effectual protection, is common in the inferiour classes of mankind. It is, indeed, a crime which is every day committed by all the ranks of society ; and it seems to be equally diffused through all nations ; it is epidemical to the world ; and it is one of the most infamous stigmas that we can apply to human nature. With regard to this crime, the rich cannot with any reason upbraid the poor. It is impossible for the latter to act more ungratefully to their friends and benefactors than the former ; from whom, however,

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we have a right to expect more generosity ; as they have far better opportunities to acquire liberal sentiments and liberal conduct.

Cunning, in the people whom I am characterizing, is a common, and it is a very mean quality. The poor man wishes to gain some point, which in *your* opinion is trifling ; to *him* it is momentous : He has not the courage to attack your property, nor to address your humanity. He makes his advances in some timid, oblique way ; by some blundering deception ; blundering, because if it gains its end, it is soon detected. I must here again observe, that a violation of integrity is condemned by the world only for the obscurity of the person *by* whom, and *against* whom it is committed ; and for its impotence or feeble consequences. It is made meritorious by its magnitude and splendid effects. The poor man over-reaches an individual, and is despised : The statesman breaks his faith with a neighbouring kingdom ;

dom; and if afterwards his measures are successful, he is * applauded.

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* Qu'on examine les hommes; on verra qu'il n'est point de crime qui ne soit mis au rang des actions honnêtes par les sociétés auxquelles ce crime est utile; ni d'action utile au public, que ne soit blâmée de quelque société particulière à qui cette même action est nuisible.

“ If we examine human nature, and the state of
“ the world, we shall find, that the worst crimes are
“ classed with laudable actions by some societies,
“ which derive advantage from those crimes; and
“ that the most amiable and beneficial virtues are
“ condemned and severely discouraged by certain
“ communities, with whose policy those virtues are
“ inconsistent.”

Helvetius; De l'Esprit: Discours II. Chap. II.

Such is the strain of the Helvetian philosophy; such is this great writer's theory of man. And that theory is one of the severest, because one of the truest satires on the human race. It is not a specious, philosophical romance of the closet; but the work of a penetrating and active mind, which had been long conversant with the world, and intent on
moral

The poor, by their idleness, and other vices, or by a long and deplorable malady, are sometimes reduced to an absolute want of the necessaries of life; and commit theft or robbery, to procure those necessaries. Heaven forbid that I should excuse those violent acts! But while I own that they are
illegal

moral and political observation. We must indeed own it a *just*, as well as a severe satire on the human species, if we recollect that its author was not only a person of illustrious talents, but that he was not stimulated to form his theory in the gloom of retirement, after a series of ungenerous and barbarous treatment. For he enjoyed a hereditary and affluent fortune; he practised the mild, the gay, the beneficent virtue; he was loved and esteemed in France; and he was admired by Europe. A ruthless inquisitor, ignorant of the genius and benevolence of Helvetius, but well acquainted with his infidelity, will class me with *him* in unbelief, for offering this eulogium to his memory. But I wish to be judged by liberal minds, who will determine, in a moment, whether our inquisitor or the writer of this note is, at least in *one* instance, the better Christian;—the man who takes up a hasty and uncharitable suspicion of his neighbour, and who denies
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illegal and wicked, Heaven forbid that I should not deeply feel for the unhappy criminals ! A country 'squire, a churchwarden, or even a parish priest may tell me, that they deserve no quarter ; for there are work-houses to receive and maintain such people. To this objection I reply, that if they abhor going into a work-house, as such institutions of pretended charity are generally conducted, I think much may be said in their favour. The managers of these houses seem to conclude, that poverty, fortunately for its victims, is a *Torpedo* ; that it renders our species as in-

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sensible

the existence of the most celebrated merit ; if it exists with faults which are injurious to *his* interest ; or he, who hath always ingenuously and openly given his tribute of encomium to conspicuous merit, whether its possessor was a Christian or Deist ;—friend or foe. With impartial and enlightened umpires between the priest and me, un suffrage, to the talents and virtues of Helvetius (to adopt the words of Montesquieu, after his praise of Julian the Apostate) un suffrage, ainsi arraché, ne me rendra point complice de son infidélité.

sensible as stocks or stones. I know that in these miserable asylums of distress, little or no regard is paid to the different accommodations and comforts which different infirmities require; and I am still more certain, that though generous and feeling hearts may be degraded to the lowest situations that can be imagined, no particular consolation is administered; no particular indulgences are allowed to such hearts, by the superintendents of these Scythian foundations:—All which very material objects, as they would be reckoned of great and tender consequence, would be attentively marked and carefully examined by sagacious and inquisitive humanity.

Though in general, our inferiour orders of men have religion more at heart than the superiour, a proper sense and veneration of religion is become very languid throughout the kingdom. This decay of piety we may partly attribute to the pestilential communication of every quarter of this island with

with London ; and partly to that contempt of religion, which is not privately and cautiously entertained, but ostentatiously and impudently displayed by the wealthy and the great. People in low circumstances often purchase, with very imprudent expence, some humble and paltry imitations of the fashions of their superiours, to whom they look up with veneration, as to terrestrial deities ; as to the universal and infallible arbitrators of right and wrong. Surely then, if these models of rectitude would exhibit in their lives the practice and decorum of religion, they would be emulated in this essential part of their conduct, by those who pay such a deference to their authority in trifles ; especially as the latter might, in their noble imitation, obtain a similitude to their great archetypes without money ; and as they would soon find it productive of their true and permanent happiness.

As I have endeavoured to give an equitable representation of the manners of the

poor, I have not directed my thoughts to those who are in difficult circumstances, or to the absolutely necessitous, who live in our metropolis. This it was proper for me to observe, lest I should seem to have been too favourable to abandoned and rapacious poverty. As to the people of wealth and fashion, we may now deem them all inhabitants of London. And there the very exalted, and the very depressed in station, are equally profligate and estranged (though in different modes) from every pursuit that is worthy of rational and immortal beings. The elegant, indeed, and the refined, as they are commonly termed, are more odious than the gross and the vulgar; for their whole external appearance and address, like the embellished sepulchres in scripture, conceal their internal corruption; promise moral propriety and beauty, and may deceive inexperience and simplicity. But the aspect, and all the other externals of those in the other extreme of life, are honestly,

honestly, and completely expressive of the shocking deformity of their minds.

From what I have now remarked, and from the whole strain of this discourse, it will perhaps more strongly appear, that mediocrity of circumstances is the most eligible allotment that can be assigned us by Providence, on whatever spot of the globe we live; and that the wish of Agur is as memorable for its good sense as for its humble piety: *Give me neither poverty nor riches: Feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord? Or lest I be poor, and steal, and* take the name of my God in vain.* (Or, more properly, lest I misapply or prostitute to falsehood, the name of my God). Prov. ch. xxx. v. 8, 9.

But let us here observe, in honour to human nature, that in many parts of the world,

* The original word is, תפס, which signifies, to seize, to take hastily; and here it undoubtedly signifies, to take rashly, presumptuously, impiously.

world, but most frequently in capitals, where our good as well as bad properties act with their utmost exertion, we see some great and unconquerable souls, maintaining a noble and vigorous opposition against adversity; and asserting the dignity and powers of the mind, in defiance of the frowns and contempt of a prejudiced, vain, and luxurious age. I speak of those who have been bred in a liberal sphere, who have distinguished themselves by their mental faculties; but from a variety of causes, which operate in our uncertain and complicated life, have never obtained their merited reward. I think the lowest mechanick, who lives soberly, bravely repels poverty, and works hard for himself and his family, is a very meritorious and respectable being. But for my present instance, I chuse the man of science and literature; because no person I suppose will deny, that in discouraging and mortifying circumstances, it is far more arduous, and therefore far more glorious, to exert reason, and memory, and fancy, than to exercise

exercise manual labour*. In a disagreeable and painful situation, to quell every injurious passion; to assume the requisite fortitude

* Qu'on parcourt la Liste des grands Hommes; on verra que les Molières, les Quinauts, les Corneilles, les Condés, les Pascals, les Fontenelles, les Mallebranches, &c. ont, pour perfectionner leur Esprit, eu Besoin du Secours de la Capitale; que les Talents campagnards sont toujours condamnés à la médiocrité; et que les Muses, qui recherchent, avec tant d'empressement, les Bois, les Fontaines, et les Prairies, ne seroient que des villageoises, si Elles ne prenoient, de temps en temps, l'air des grandes villes.

"If we recollect the lives of our great men, we shall find that the Molières, the Quinauts, the Corneilles, the Condés, the Pascals, the Fontenelles, the Mallebranches, &c. would not have shone forth with all their lustre, without the assistance of the Capital; that those talents which reside always in the country, never rise above mediocrity; and that the Muses, who are so fond of woods, streams and meadows, would resemble the awkward and uninformed girls of a village, if they did not frequently visit a metropolis."

Helvetius; De l'Esprit: Discours III. Chap. XXVII. Note.

fortitude and resolution; to despise little ideas and personal wants; to examine, with Newton, the laws of the universe; or to create the vivid pictures of gay or moral imagination;—to achieve these exploits, raises the man who performs them to the pinnacle of one kind of human excellence; and makes him as great in letters as the unfortunate Epictetus was in philosophy, or the unfortunate Annibal in war. For the consolation, and for the honour of those who suffer adversity, instances like this which I have now produced, are not extremely rare, are not absolute prodigies, among the well educated poor: But where shall we find an example of equal heroism among the rich and the great?

Thus I have endeavoured to represent to you, impartially and explicitly, the comparative merit and demerit, of the rich and poor. If I have taken a too extensive or too particular a survey of these objects, you will excuse me, on account of the great importance of the view. In summing
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ing up the evidence between the parties (for we have a right to bring them both to a fair trial, in the sacred chancery under *this roof*) it appears that both the prosperous and the unfortunate, have strong temptations to deviate from the path of moral and evangelical rectitude; but that more innocence, equanimity, and virtue, are acquired in the school of adversity, than in the palace of fortune. For these advantages on the side of the poor, I have already accounted. They often determine, at the authoritative call of necessity, to give all the *laudable* activity and flexibility of the mind, all its most ingenious, and sublimest energies, their full play.* Hence they acquire the art of filling their time with

* La prosperidad, y regalos, nos enflaquecen, y hazen caer en grandes males: las adversidades, y Trabajos, nos abiven, y nos despiertan.

“ By prosperity and luxury, we are enervated
 “ and made victims to our follies; by adversity and
 “ hardships, we are roused and animated to gene-
 “ rous enterprize.

Mariana's History of Spain.

with proper employment; prevent vice and dissipation from making their fatal inroads on the heart; raise a conscientious fund of self approbation; and deserve the respect of the community. But how can *they* be actuated with these ingenuous exertions; how can *they* obtain these inestimable acquisitions, whom fortune, like a cruelly indulgent and doating parent, keeps perpetually in a state of indolent, capricious, and petulant infancy; and who startle at the very *name* of difficulty? For how can we gain those objects which have always been most ardently pursued by the wise and good; how can we gain any *real* honours or any *real* satisfaction in ourselves; without great patience, perseverance, and self-denial; without many vigorous and victorious conflicts with our love of ease; with all the obliquities; with all the destructive propensities of our nature?

It is likewise evident, that the vices of the indigent are circumscribed by the circum-

cumscription of their power ; and I am afraid that poor sustenance contributes more to subdue the turbulence of all the passions, than the most eloquent lectures of christian morality. In balancing this account, I must, injustice, farther observe, that the bad qualities and habits of the poor are of small extent, from the obscurity of their situations, as well as from their want of power. For the faults and the crimes of grandeur are committed on conspicuous ground ; they are exposed to the eye, and to the shafts of envy ; while many a base desire, and many a presumptuous discontent at the dispensations of Providence, dawn, inflame, and die, in the silent and sequestered cottage, without notice and without effect.

I am certain, however, that every humane heart of this congregation, hath given its verdict in favour of the poor, with a laudable partiality ; or rather with a just and distinguishing lenity. For the weak and the friendless, an ardent sympathy

pathy is always entertained by the generous and the good. And, indeed, in the eye of reason, as we are too strongly impressed by present, and too weakly affected by future objects, a more determined and elevated merit is required of those who have every immediate reward proposed to them for their virtue, than of those who, after a series of uncommon worth, are only recompensed in *this* world, with a prolongation of life. The conduct of the rich, and that of the poor, are viewed by two sorts of men, in an inverted ratio of moral estimation. The rich man's act of common civility is a monument of virtue: While he is not a convicted felon, he can hardly be guilty of misconduct, in the opinion of the mere supple, selfish, unfeeling man of the world. But to the poor man he gives no quarter; to *him* he attributes no merit. If he hath stolen, to satisfy his hunger, he deserves death; if he is obedient, sober, and industrious, our insolent judge blasphemously misapplies the

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the language of Scripture, and says, *he is an unprofitable servant; he has done that which was his duty to do*; Luke, chap. xvii. v. 10. On the contrary, the bold and gigantic vices of the great, are censured with an honest and warrantable indignation; large allowances are always made, and the most tender compassion is always expressed, for the poor, by the Philosopher and the Christian.

I shall now make the directly religious application for which my discourse was principally intended, and which, I am afraid, you will think I have too long deferred. Believe me, it was not my aim to display the parade of the rhetorician, or of the mere modern moralist; but to evince the use, the necessity, the efficacy of Christianity. And as *this* was my aim, I here beg leave to observe, that where I have used the word *chance*, or *fortune*, I desire not to be understood literally; for I *there* only adopted the common mode of language. I am thoroughly

convinced, as I hope we all are, that all our prosperous and adverse events, are effected by the completely wise and good permission or disposal, of an all-seeing and all-ruling Providence.

The precepts enjoined, and the retributions proposed to us, with infallible certainty, by the Christian religion, are our best, our only salutary guides and monitors, in every sphere of life. But they are particularly indispensable, and efficacious, in trying situations; such as those of prosperity and adversity; where our fortitude and resolution are put to the proof; often to a severe, to an extreme proof, in the latter state. If the rich, and poor, gave but the two following texts of Scripture their just importance, they would act in their respective stations with christian virtue. *Charge them that are rich in this world, (says St. Paul) that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy: That they do good; that they*

they be rich in good works; ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation for the time to come; that they may lay hold on eternal life. 1 Tim. ch. vi. v. 17, 18, 19.

And the same Apostle observes (an observation, which, though peculiarly applicable to the persecutions that were suffered by the first preachers of Christianity, may be asserted of any species of adversity, in any age)—*our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* 2 Cor. ch. iv. v. 17.

If we really and firmly believed, that these, and many such passages of Scripture, were dictated by the spirit of God, we should undoubtedly live correspondently with our belief. Indeed all the moral and practical parts of the Christian religion, are addressed to our reason as well as to our faith: Our observance of them will, in the general course of human events, as certainly make our existence very agreeable

here, as it will make us unspeakably happy hereafter. Therefore, let no man say, when he rejects Christianity, that he has given it a fair hearing; that he rejects it after a calm, and dispassionate inquiry. Men continue obstinate infidels, not from the incredibility of religion. A course of intemperance, the habit of indulging any illicit passions, embarrasses and distracts the mind; keeps it in a continual fever; makes it abhor to study those pure, and awful truths, which must condemn its own practices; vitiates the moral taste, and clouds the understanding.

On this powerful and celestial religion, then, let us found our hopes of a uniform and unshaken practice of virtue. Look back to the boasted characters of antiquity; to the luminaries of the principal sects of philosophy in old Greece and Rome.—The conduct of * Cicero (I am sorry to arraign

* What I have here asserted of Cicero, is well known to be true; notwithstanding the elaborate, but weak defence of his character by Dr. Middleton.

arraign the morals of a man, whose genius I idolize) the conduct of Cicero, the disciple of Plato, was inconsistent, timid,

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The public may not, in general, be so well acquainted with Brutus's usury, and with his treachery to the cause of the commonwealth; nor with the respect and kindness which were shown by Atticus to one of the most abominable wretches that ever existed. These facts, therefore, I shall communicate to the reader, as they are related by the undistinguishing admirer, and encomiast of Cicero; and by the accurate, spirited, and elegant translator of the Letters of that illustrious Roman.

“ The City of Salamis, in Cyprus, owed to two
 “ of Brutus's friends, as he pretended, Scaptius,
 “ and Matinius, above twenty thousand pounds
 “ sterling, upon bond, at a most extravagant interest;
 “ and he begged of Cicero (who was then
 “ proconsul of Cilicia) to take their persons and
 “ concerns, under his special protection. Appius,
 “ who was Brutus's father-in-law, had granted
 “ every thing that was asked to Scaptius, a præ-
 “ fecture in Cyprus, with some troops of horse, with
 “ which he miserably harrassed the poor Salami-
 “ nians, in order to force them to comply with his
 “ unreasonable demands: For he shut up their
 “ whole Senate in the council-room, till five of
 “ them

and hypocritical. Brutus, one of the chief ornaments of the stoical sect; the enthusiastick admirer of virtue, and the patron

“ them were starved to death with hunger. Brutus
“ laboured to place him in the same degree of favour with Cicero; but Cicero being informed
“ of this violence, at Ephesus, by a deputation
“ from Salamis, made it the first act of his Government to recal the troops from Cyprus, and put
“ an end to Scaptius’s præfecture; having laid it
“ down for a rule, to grant no command to any
“ man who was concerned in trade, or negotiating
“ money in the province. To give satisfaction,
“ however, to Brutus, he enjoined the Salaminians
“ to pay off Scaptius’s bond; which they were
“ ready to do, according to the tenour of his edict,
“ by which he had ordered, that no bonds in *his*
“ province should carry above one per cent. by the
“ month. Scaptius refused to take the money on
“ those terms; insisting on four per cent. (per
“ month!) as the condition of his bond expressed;
“ which computation almost doubled the principal
“ sum: While the Salaminians, as they protested
“ to Cicero, could not have paid the original debt,
“ if they had not been enabled to do it by his help,
“ and out of his own dues that he had remitted to
“ them; which amounted to somewhat more than
“ Scaptius’s legal demand.

“ This

patron of liberty ; Brutus was a notorious usurer ; and, what is yet more surprising, Brutus was perfidious to the declining,

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and

“ This extortion raised Cicero’s indignation ;
 “ and notwithstanding the repeated instances of
 “ Brutus and Atticus, he was determined to over-
 “ rule it; though Brutus, in order to move him
 “ the more effectually, thought proper to confess
 “ that he had all along dissembled ;—THAT THE
 “ DEBT WAS REALLY HIS OWN, AND SCAPTIVS
 “ ONLY HIS AGENT IN IT.

Middleton’s Life of Cicero, Vol. II. p. 187.

“ Marcus Brutus (says Mr. Melmoth) was nephew
 “ to Cato ; whose virtues he had the just ambition
 “ to copy. He seems, however, in some points, to
 “ have fallen short of the model he proposed to
 “ imitate ; as he by no means acted up to that
 “ inflexible uniformity of conduct which renders
 “ the character of Cato so gloriously singular.—
 “ Thus, though Brutus, at the battle of Pharsalia,
 “ engaged on the side of Pompey, yet immediately
 “ after the unsuccessful event of that action, he not
 “ only made his peace with Cæsar, but was willing
 “ to contribute to the ruin of that cause in which
 “ he had so lately engaged. For Cæsar, being
 “ doubtful of what route Pompey had taken, in his
 “ flight,

and almost desperate fortune of the commonwealth of Rome. Atticus, too, a famous Epicurean, was a notorious usurer.

And

“ flight, it was by the advice and information of
“ Brutus that he followed him into Egypt.”——

*Plutarch. In vita Bruti.—From the Notes to Melmoth’s
Translation of Cicero’s Epistles, Vol. II. B. ix. Ep. 13.*

The trimming conduct of Atticus is as notorious as his usury. But what an *infamous* trimmer he was, the following quotation, from Cicero’s Biographer, will evince.

“ Atticus always paid a particular Court to AN-
“ TONY ; and in the time even of his disgrace, when
“ he was driven out of Italy, and his affairs thought
“ desperate, did many eminent services to his friends
“ at Rome, and above all, to his wife and children ;
“ whom he assisted not only with his advice, but
“ with his money also, on all occasions of their di-
“ strefs ; so that when Antony came to Rome, in
“ the midst of the massacre, he made it his first care
“ to find out Atticus ; and no sooner learnt where
“ he was, than he wrote him word, with his own
“ hand, to lay aside all fears, and to come to him
“ immediately ; and assigned him a guard to protect
“ him from any insult or violence of the soldiers.”

Middleton’s Life of Cicero, Vol. III. p. 378.

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And when men were contending for freedom (a sacred and alarming crisis, which always calls forth the decided, and most vigorous

I would not have offered such an insult to the Christian Religion, as to have shown its great superiority to the Epicurean sect, if I had considered *sensual* pleasure as the chief pursuit, as the chief good, of the disciples of Epicurus. But when that great philosopher pronounced pleasure the chief good, he meant *that* pleasure which results from the practice of virtue. Virtue and pleasure, were, in *his* opinion, so intimately connected; he was so thoroughly convinced, that without virtue, there was no pleasure worth enjoying, that he made virtue and pleasure synonymous terms. And agreeably to this encouraging and beautiful idea, the best of his disciples thought and lived.

That this was the ruling object of Epicurus and his true followers, might be proved by the authority of many ancient writers. It is proved by a passage in a letter of Cassius the Conspirator, who, late in life, took the Epicurean philosophy for his moral guide.

Ipse—Epicurus, a quo omnes Catii, et Amasii, mali verborum interpretes, proficiscuntur, dicit, οὐκ εἰν ἡδews, ἀνευ του καλως, και δικαιως ἔν.

Cicero. Epist. Lib. XV. Epist. XIX. Cassius Ciceroni.

“ Epicurus

vigorous exertions of the honest and the brave) all the views and actions of Atticus were centered in himself; in his own personal safety; hence, he kept well with all parties; and hence, he was equally liberal, and made equal professions of friendship, to the profligate and the good.

If, then, we rest our conduct, and our hopes and fears, on any human theory, we shall find, on some emergency, that we have been indeed attentive hearers, but that we cannot be effectual doers, of that which is right. We shall find, that we have been seduced by an elegant and pleasing speculation. Our fair structure, like the foolish man's house in the Gospel, will be built upon

“ Epicurus himself, from whom the Catii, and
 “ the Amasini, together with the rest of those injurious interpreters of his meaning, pretend to
 “ derive their tenets, expressly declares, THAT A
 “ PLEASURABLE LIFE CAN ALONE BE PROCURED
 “ CURED BY THE PRACTICE OF VIRTUE.”

Melmoth's Translation of Cicero's Letters, B. X. Let. 22.

upon sand; and, like *his* house, it will fall, in some tempest and whirlwind of the passions. *The rains will descend, and the floods come, and the winds blow, and beat upon that house; and it will fall; and great will be its fall;—great,* in proportion to the confidence and presumption of its possessor, Mat. ch. vii. v. 24. But if the system of our conduct is founded upon the Gospel, it is founded upon a rock: The principles of the fabrick will secure us through time; and they will operate in eternity.

S E R M O N III.

ON SELF-KNOWLEDGE.

I. COR. CHAP. XI. PART OF 28TH VERSE.

—LET A MAN EXAMINE HIMSELF.✓

I SHALL take the liberty, in the following discourse, to wave any particular view of sacramental preparation, the object to which the words of my text are immediately applied. I shall take a general, extensive, and as complete a survey as I can, of the great importance and use of a proper, thorough examination, and knowledge of ourselves.

Know thyself, has been justly deemed a golden, a celestial precept, by the most illustrious of the ancient, as well as of the modern sages. It is, undoubtedly, one of the most useful and comprehensive precepts
in

in the whole moral system. Thales * of Miletus is said to have been its first authour. It, in time, acquired the authority of a divine oracle : It was supposed to have been given originally by Apollo himself ; and it was written in golden capitals over the door of his Temple at Delphi. To this account of its celestial source, Juvenal, that animated and noble Roman satyrist, gives his honourable testimony ; who, without hesitation, asserts, that this maxim, *know thyself*, descended † from Heaven. Of this general opinion Cicero ‡ gives us the following

* He flourished about the year of the world 3330 ; and was contemporary with Josiah, King of Judah.

† — E cœlo descendit Γνωθὶ Σέαυτορ.

Figendum, et memori tractandum pectore, five
 Conjugium quæras, vel sacri in parte senatus
 Esse velis ; nec enim Loricam poscit Achillis
 Therfites, in quâ se traducebat Ulysses
 Ancipitem, ceu tu magno discrimine causam
 Protegere affectas ; te Consule, dic tibi quis sis.

Juvenal. Sat. xvi. v. 27.

‡ Hæc enim, [i. e. philosophia] nos cum cæteras
 res omnes, tum quod est difficillimum docuit ; ut
 nosmet

lowing reason:—"This precept," says he, "hath such force, hath such important sense in it, that it was not attributed to any mortal, but to the Delphic God."

If we view the maxim in all the latitude which it admits, it would require a longer time for discussion than I can presume to request of you on this occasion. I shall, however, as concisely, yet as clearly and pertinently as is in my power, survey its import, and the salutary objects which it brings to the mind; as they relate to ourselves,

nosmet ipsos nosceremus. Cujus præcepti tanta vis, tanta sententia est, ut ea non homini cuiquam, sed Delphico Deo tribueretur.

Cicero, de Legibus: Lib. I.

— Quod præceptum quia majus erat quam ut ab homine videatur, idcirco assignatum est Deo. Jubet igitur nos Pythius Apollo noscere nosmet-ipsos.

Cicero, de Finibus: Lib. V. Chap. 16.

Et nimirum hanc habet vim præceptum Apollinis, quo monet ut se quisque noscat. Hunc igitur nosse [i. e. animum] nisi divinum esset, non esset hoc acrioris cujusdam animi præceptum, sic ut tributum Deo sit; hoc est, seipsum posse cognoscere.

Cicero, Tusc. Quest. Book V.

selves, to our neighbours, and, in general, to human nature. If my method of treating this momentous subject is not rigidly formal, I flatter myself that it will be sufficiently regular and perspicuous.

An accurate and impartial examination and knowledge of ourselves, would produce in us a most amiable temper of mind, in our intercourse with others ; it would produce in us a christian candour, and indulgence to their frailties and their faults. For as self-examination, and its consequence, self-knowledge, are the duties of every one, they are in the power of every one. They demand no sublimity and refinement of genius ; they are within the attainment of the plainest understanding. Nor are they out of our power, from the taint and depravity which we unfortunately receive, by our mixture with the world. Let us have but courage enough to retire frequently from that world, for our improvement in virtue ; let us court the oracles of solitude, and we shall find, that the tumultuous, the impetuous passions, will

will be hushed ; that the fatal delusion, with regard to our real characters, which flows either from our own adulation, or from the adulation of others, will entirely vanish ; that the severe, but salutary voice of reason and of conscience will be distinctly heard ; and that we shall be completely exhibited to ourselves. And in the interesting picture, perhaps the very best of us would see so many humbling and mortifying objects ; such a want of fair proportion and grace ; so many lineaments of deformity ; that if we often used this harsh, but wholesome discipline, we should certainly return from the shades of the soundest and most useful philosophy, into the walks of public life, the determined, and successful imitators of our mild and merciful Master. Were we all thoroughly and properly acquainted with our own trespasses, the first *hard* stone of censure, of condemnation, and of death, would never be thrown from a heart as flinty as itself, against an unfortunate offender. How

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generous

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generous

generous would then our observations be, on characters which are composed of virtues and of vices ; nay, with what regret should we condemn an unhappy character, which, with many vices, possessed even but *one* noble virtue ! We should scorn the cold and rigid letter of the law, which killeth ; and apply to the warm and generous spirit which maketh alive. We should not, with the sourness and inflexibility of an inquisitor, exact the same steadiness in rectitude of conduct, from men of all descriptions and destinies ! We should make equitable and large allowances for constitution, for hard, and trying situations ; in which, I apprehend, it is far easier to rail at misconduct than to conduct one's self well : We should make large allowances for the excesses of beautiful, but dangerous sensibility. There would then be no violent resentment, no lasting malignity ; none of your timid, proud, and puny half-forgiveness of injuries, which still continues *willing to wound,*

wound, but is *yet* afraid or *ashamed* to strike. Our manners would then be animated, and adorned with esteem, with cordiality, with affection; with a unison, a musick more ravishing to the heart of man than that of the spheres;—I mean, social, moral, and religious harmony. In the progress of my discourse, what beneficent, what charming effects have already resulted from self-knowledge!

In the acquisition of self-knowledge, we ought to comprehend a serious, and intimate acquaintance with the frailties and miseries of our earthly, and perishable part. And if we reflected frequently and maturely on *them*, we should be as strongly and habitually disposed to supply the wants, as to forgive the faults of our fellow-creatures. The rich man, by this species of reflection, would gain the most divine of human pleasures; for he would learn to feel, to sympathize, and to relieve. He would be eager to perform those noble and extensive acts of humanity and benevolence,

to which he was not before sufficiently impelled;—not from an absolute barbarity of his nature, but from that intoxicating elegance and grandeur that surround him; from that whirl of pleasure and dissipation, which fatally, against the good of mankind, prevent attention to the scenes of human woe. He would then begin to be convinced, that we may be stung with hunger, and frozen with cold. While winter in vain drove all its horrors against *his* impenetrable fortress, the mansion of luxury and splendour; he would recollect a neighbouring widow and her young family, in a dark and ruinous cot, pining with famine, and shivering to the blast;—a woman who deserved a better fate; who herself had seen flourishing days; and who in those days, had always been ready to shed the tear of sympathy, and to give the tribute of more effectual relief. This excellent self-knowledge; this acquaintance with the hard condition of mortality; and the forcible impression which this most eloquent

S E R M O N III. 69

quent object fixes in his imagination, make him droop in the midst of gaiety; and he cannot enjoy a moment's peace till he hath sheltered her from the storm.

From the powerful instructions of this moral and christian school, he is the active and magnificent patron of every kind of merit. He shows all possible tenderness and respect to the first of human honours, intellectual genius. He admires the intrepid and exalted spirit of its possessor, who, in proportion to his difficulties and distresses; is tenacious of his rights; who scorns pretended, or half friendship; spurns *the proud man's contumely*; and with a magnanimous inflexibility, asserts the high prerogatives, the glory of his nature. Such a man, our liberal and thorough self-examiner is ambitious effectually to befriend; he frees him from the pains of a great mind contending with adversity; he frees him from the affected contempt of a stupid, and envious age; and raises him to affluence, to honours, and to fame.

I need not observe, that a proper, and often repeated inquiry into the state of our own minds, and into the tenour of our own conduct, will undoubtedly prevail with us, to reform what is wrong in our habits of thought and action. We are not lost to virtue, from a *total* degeneracy of our nature; but from a want of the honest, and calm lectures of the heart, undisturbed, uninterrupted by the noise and glitter of the world. The latter objects, if we are always immersed in them, infallibly lead us to deception and misery; the former are our friendly and, certain guides to truth and happiness.

Such are the sure consequences of self-examination, and self-knowledge. They make us lenient judges of the faults of others; rigorous inspectors, and eradicators of our own. They teach us to obtain the God-like pleasure of doing good; to still the complaints of fainting indigence, to heal the pains of sentiment and virtue; to call forth the astonishing exertions of the human

human mind ; to make that image of God shine forth in all its glory.

What a beautiful revolution should we feel in the character of the human species, if this self-knowledge, and the actions derived from it, had their full play ! Humanity, strenuous and generous assistance, a tender and active anxiety for the welfare of our neighbour, would be the new lineaments of the race of man ! We should all be true friends ; we should all be true brothers to one another. We should make a glorious retreat, from the modern golden age of European rapacity, back to the happy golden age of poetical fable !

A thorough self-knowledge, would produce in us a lively consciousness of the humane and liberal treatment that we should wish for, if we were in a dependent situation ; and consequently, it would prevail with us to show our inferiours all possible lenity, indulgence, and generosity. Nothing proves a bad heart more, than rough and tyrannical behaviour ; nothing

more demonstrates a good one, than gentle, and benevolent manners to those who are placed in the low stations of life. The study of ourselves, of our own feelings, of our own hopes, and fears, and wishes, would teach us the tenderest use, the strongest, the most active, the most beneficent exertion of our power ; especially in favour of the unfortunate, the mortified, and the oppressed ; from whatever source that power was derived ; whether from wealth, from talents, or from personal influence. We should uniformly, and zealously perform a noble duty, enjoined as in a celebrated text of Scripture :—*All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them ; for this is the law, and the prophets.* Mat. ch. vii. v. 12.—What can be said, more strongly to recommend self-examination, than that it would make us obedient to the very essence of the law, of the prophets, and of the gospel too ?

I shall

I shall here beg leave to propose a rule, which will contribute to make our self-examination complete, and efficacious; which will amicably co-operate with our quiet retirement from the business and trifles of life. Before we presume to examine and know ourselves, we must resolve to clear our minds from all partiality to ourselves; to our own habits, pursuits, and pleasures. We must not think of distinguishing virtue from vice, by any narrow, local, or personal standard; but by the plain and evident laws of natural morality, and by the rules of the gospel. Nor are we only to affix the different degrees of moral rectitude and obliquity, to the several virtues and vices, from the particular impulse of the heart, from which they flow; but likewise in proportion to the good or bad consequences which they naturally and constantly produce. As to vices, in this generous world of ours, they are only estimated by their effects. Mankind will easily, will cheerfully

fully forgive you for being selfish; nay, even for being a dexterous villain, though you should be, at the same time, not a little malicious; for, notwithstanding these abominable qualities, your selfishness, and artful villainy, may enable you to be very useful to society, and to contribute very much to *their* entertainment. But unless you are authorized by fortune to act as you please, for an immoderate propensity to pleasure, they never forgive you: Because, though it is often the vice of minds, which, in other respects, are amiable and great, it is apt to make a man neglect his interest, and to become quite useless to himself and others. Let us, therefore, always attend to effects as well as causes; let us disapprove in others, and let us banish from our own attachment and practice, those immoderate passions, which reduce us to a total negligence of our well-being; and which, though they do not originate from a narrow, selfish, and malignant heart, contract, in time, and by too much indulgence,

indulgence, even the disinterested and expanded soul ; weaken and break the vigour of the mind ; and overwhelm and extinguish the flame of generous ambition.

In acquiring speculative, and practical self-knowledge, we must pay a serious and severe attention to the many low appetites, to the many moral infirmities, by which we are subject to be enslaved, from the intimate connection of body with mind ; from the union of our grosser substance with our immaterial frame. This consideration, properly applied, will make us resolutely and diligently watch, and controul, sense and passion. It will make us the vigilant guardians of all our conduct : It will teach us caution, humility, mildness, and temperance. It will make the current of life flow on, in a clear, and pleasurable course ; no foul mixture will sully ; no rude tempest will violently agitate the stream. It will prevent every disorder of the body ; and it will prevent the more horrible maladies of the mind.

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The last reflection that I have recommended, tends, if we use it as we ought, to humble, and mortify the pride of man. The objects which I shall *now* present to your view, will certainly inspire us with a true sense of the dignity of our nature; will stimulate us to exalt our thoughts and actions. Let us for a while, survey ourselves, as rational and immortal beings. Let us dwell earnestly, and ardently on that illustrious part of self-knowledge, which fires us to every generous and noble enterprize. Let us consider, of what admirable improvements, in intellect, and virtue, we are capable, even here below. Let us, then, dart a prophetic and enraptured eye into futurity; and contemplate, as well as mortal vision can distinguish, the possible progress, the possible expansion of the human mind, in that state which will be infinite both in space and duration.

What noble exploits we can achieve, even while we are clogged with our
earthly

earthly frame, let the shades of those poets, orators, philosophers, sage legislators, virtuous and intrepid patriots, testify ; whose lives have rendered the annals of mankind august and awful ! But if we look beyond the grave, how the prospect is widened, and aggrandized ! How will the mind of the most illiterate and ignorant peasant, (who, if he is an honest man, is respectable while he is upon earth) how will his mind be brightened and enlarged, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, long before the last trump, at the instant of the separation of that mind from its body ! It is probable that this peasant will immediately comprehend many remote, and astonishing truths, which escaped the enquiries of a Newton, while he continued in our world ! But if we extend our views, by no means, to an improbable and romantic height ; if we consider ourselves removing, with unembodied flight, from one system of planets to another ; darting through the unmeasurable regions

regions of space ; examining the works of the deity with unspeakable delight ; continually improving in knowledge and elevated piety ;—ever approaching, yet never reaching, the sacred fountain of all perfection ;—while our God looks down upon our progress with a paternal eye of approbation and pleasure ;—when we anticipate these scenes, which, I have not the least doubt, are awaiting us ;—how exquisite should our feelings, how sublime should our sentiments be ; how full of humility and gratitude, to our great Creator !

When we thus reflect with that attention which the objects of our reflection deserve, on the dignity, I was going to say, on the majesty of man, surely we ought to endeavour to banish for ever from our breasts, every mean prejudice and passion, every groveling and debasing idea. Such ideas ill become that being, who in *this* world, can gain many invaluable acquirements and accomplishments ; who shoots
the

the lightening of the soul, in the senate and in the field; who pursues, and fixes the tract of the comet; and who can ascend in discovery, and in devotion, to the throne of his Maker!—Such ideas ill become that being, who, wonderful as his intellectual exertions are here, is hereafter to be rapidly and eternally improving.

I flatter myself that I have made the indispensable duty, and great advantages of self-examination and self-knowledge, so evident and indisputable to your judgement, that I need say little more to enforce their importance. However, as I told you in the beginning of this discourse, that antiquity attributed to them the authority of the oracle at Delphi, let me not omit to corroborate and ratify the precept of the text, by other passages from the oracles of the only true God.

In many parts of scripture, self-examination and self-knowledge are earnestly inculcated. We are frequently exhorted to these duties by St. Paul; who recommends

mends the assistance of the law of God, as an excellent criterion by which to judge ourselves, in our self-examination. *The word of God* (says he, very emphatically) *is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword; piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow; and is a discerner of the thoughts, and intents of the heart.*—Heb. chap. iv. v. 12.

Examine yourselves, saith the same Apostle;—*prove, or try your own selves;—know you not yourselves?* 2. Cor. chap. xiii. v. 5.

Our Saviour reproaches his Disciples with their self-ignorance, in *not knowing of what manner of spirit they were.*—Luke. chap. ix. v. 55.

And St. Paul further saith :—*If a man thinketh himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.*—*But let every man prove his own work; and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.* Gal. chap. vi. v. 3, 4.—Excellent advice !

advice ! And how could St. Paul have shown us the great importance of self-examination, and self-knowledge, in a more striking manner, than by reminding us that they give us the glorious independence of virtue ; that they give us that true, and permanent happiness, which must be *in*, and *from* ourselves ;—not that insufficient and precarious happiness, which we are foolishly eager to obtain from the capricious and transitory smiles and favours of a vain, selfish, and unfeeling world !

The Old Testament frequently, and strongly, impresses self-knowledge on its readers. *Keep thy heart with all diligence*, says the wise King of Israel. Prov. chap. iv. v. 23. *Commune with your own heart, and in your chamber, and be still*, says the Psalmist :—Psalm iv. v. 4. as if he had said—
 “ Retire from the business, the dissipa-
 “ tion, the tumult of life, to the stillness
 “ of solitude ; and there deliberately and
 “ seriously examine yourself ; there learn

S E R M O N I V.

ON HUMANITY TO THE ANIMAL CREATION.

PROVERBS, CHAP. XII. VERSE IOTH.

A MERCIFUL MAN REGARDETH THE LIFE
OF HIS BEAST.

MANY minds are so callous to humanity and justice, that they ridicule those who protect their domestick animals with that lenity and care, which we ought to practise to our dependents of every species and denomination. Surely, then, the man would be honoured, with the sovereign contempt of such unthinking and unfeeling wretches, who should form a deliberate discourse, to recommend mercy and tenderness; a proper degree of regard and affection, for that part of the works of the Supreme Being, which is

often, with a sentiment of too much disdain, termed the Brute Creation.

I will not entertain so ungenerous, so unchristian an opinion of any individual of this congregation, as to suspect, that his heart derides me for having chosen a subject, on which I intend, in this discourse, to enlarge. If the mercy of God is over all his works, it certainly is not unbecoming of his Ministers; it certainly is their *indispensable duty*, zealously and boldly to impress in the breasts of their hearers, an imitation of their merciful Creator. If a sparrow falls not on the ground without the parental attention of our Heavenly Father, would it not be presumption, would it not be impiety, in such a reptile as I, to think it beneath me to plead the cause of the feathered tribes; and to declaim against the persecutions, against the torments, which they suffer from young barbarians?—I have often felt the most pungent grief, and the warmest indignation, at the tyranny which I have seen exercised on
those

those honest, useful, and generous creatures, which deserve at our hands diametrically contrary treatment; and I have long determined to make *my* very humble contribution of argument and eloquence, to alleviate their miseries. Pardon this observation; it is a digression; because it makes too honourable mention of myself.

I propose to take an unrestrained, an unlimited, a general survey of our iniquities to the animal creation; and to evince the horrible nature of such misconduct. Nothing shall confine me in my ingenuous excursions on this subject; neither the obduracy of commerce, nor of art; nor the amusements and sports of the idle, the rich, and the great. I hope my discourse is dictated by a proper fear and reverence of God; therefore it is impossible for me to entertain any improper, any pusillanimous fear and reverence of Man.

But I request this congregation to be so just to me, as not to entertain the least suspicion that I have meditated and written

what I shall now deliver to them, from a supercilious and undistinguishing pride to combat the authority of custom, and the more formidable frowns of wealth and grandeur. A mind that is at all habituated to the investigation of respectable truth, cannot, in matters of consequence, be satisfied with trifling and superficiality; he endeavours to probe into the essence, and to comprehend the boundaries of each important question. Liberality and candour will not hastily impute spleen, and malevolence, to one who is industrious to diffuse universal mildness and humanity; to an humble, but earnest advocate for those unfortunate beings, which cannot make effectual resistance against the art, and power, and outrages of man; and which, to the scandal of a polished country, are unprotected by the laws.

Before I proceed farther, I must beg leave to offer a proposition, which I believe cannot be refuted by the philosophical; and will not be controverted by the humane;

mane; viz. that at a phyfical medium, a being of a merely animal fpecies, feels as much pain as a human being, if both are tormented in the fame way. I fhall venture likewise to affert, that hope and fear, are paffions in the nature of animals, as forcibly as in ours;—and that therefore, we fhould confider them, with regard to thefe paffions, as delicately as poffible. As to the finer and the nobler paffions;—as to gratitude, affection, and fidelity, they are far fuperiour to thofe of our fpecies, who are weak in moral and religious principle and fentiment; I mean to the greater part of mankind. I here beg, that parents may inculcate to their children, the good qualities of the animal creation;—but particularly, that they are never abufively and outrageoufly treated, without feeling extreme pain:—In fhort, that in the language of our admirable dramatick poet, that great mafter of nature; however we may magnify our fenfibility and excellence, and pre-eminence, to our-
felves,

selves, *an insect feels a pang as great as when a giant dies.* If these truths were strongly, and repeatedly inculcated on the minds of unthinking boys, they would abstain from those cruelties which they wantonly apply to the domestick and aerial animals. For it is as true, as it is deplorable to reflect, that as we grow older, we are apt to grow worse; we are apt to grow more resentful, and more tyrannical. The barbarities, which, in manhood and age, we commit on the inferiour orders of existence, from revenge and tyranny, are commonly, in our puerile days, only the actions of inconsiderate ignorance and vivacity.

If it is granted, that the sensations of animals, on violent treatment, are, in general, as painful as our own, that very assent will prove, that we have not only no right, but that it is extremely immoral, and base in us, to give them any unnecessary pain. After that assent, there will be no need to shew the criminality of abusing

abusing the inferiour beings, by a series of argument. For if they who acknowledge the truth of this leading proposition, still peremptorily and *merely* insist, that they have a right to use animals as they please, they must have an unparalleled effrontery: Or, if by any refinement on the art of reasoning; if by any new metaphysical subtlety, they can demonstrate that right, or even make it appear specious, they must be inimitable disputants.

A fair and lively induction of facts, then, will, I hope, only be requisite, to promote our humanity to those animals which are familiar to us, or which are, in any way, within our reach or influence. I am far from intending to give a minute display of the many human barbarities which are committed against this part of the creation. I should very inconsistently deprecate the wanton infliction of all intense pain, if I should elaborately endeavour to break a humane audience upon the wheel of imagination.

But

But let us not shrink from taking a view of the miseries of those creatures, of which *we* were appointed by Heaven, to be the guardians and the protectors, not the tyrants and the tormentors ; of those creatures which are essentially organized like ourselves. Let us take a view of their miseries, even at some expence of sentiment and feeling ; if it tends to make us more compassionate and merciful ; if, in other words, it tends to make us better christians. If we would improve, and exalt our morality and our conduct, we must often give an attentive and sympathizing eye to woe. We cannot act well and nobly, unless we suffer. To feel distress, as it operates on ourselves ; and exquisitely to feel for the distresses of others, are the pungent, but salutary parts of our moral regimen, that soften, and refine, and purify our virtue.

I shall first animadvert on the conduct of the epicure to the animals of the table. I am always eager to brand *him* ; for, of
all

all sensualists, he is the most despicable and odious.

It long ago pleased the Authour and the Father of the universe, to permit us to make animals our food; undoubtedly, after taking their life, with as little pain as possible. But with this food, with this luxury, the selfish and remorseless epicure is not contented. An innocent creature, which, however weak, is absolutely a respectable being, comparatively with himself, must be long nourished, and kept in a very irksome and painful manner, and then put to a lingering, and most tormenting death, to gratify his palate, and to please his eye. Would it be unchristian, my fellow-christians, to wish, that the food of such men might be converted into their poison? But the established course of Providence, which I was forgetting, precludes my wish; of Providence, who, even in *this* world, often opportunely and strongly distinguishes between virtue and vice, by many pertinent and palpable dispensations.

penfations. The progrefive retribution of the epicure is mortifying and horrible. The load, and the exertion, with which he harraffes and finks nature, deprefs the mind, and bring a torpor on the heart; fmother the emanation of the Deity; extinguifh every generous and friendly fentiment; arreft the throb for virtue and for fame; deaden the gay forms and colours of imagination; and check the play of the finer paffions. Then come the avengers of animal innocence; fome fatal maladies; fome emiffaries from the family of pain; of flow ftep, but of certain, and mortal effect; of hideous afpects, and armed with formidable weapons. He dies a lingering, melancholy, and excruciating death; defpifed by the world, and intolerable to himfelf.

I fhall now make fome free obfervations on our rural fports; in which obfervations, I fhould wifh not to offend any perfon. But when our humanity is at ftake, I *will* not be referved. I am fenfible that
many

many people, from taste, or habit, are much addicted to these diversions, whose hearts are, in other respects, very tender and benevolent; because they do not reflect on their barbarous effects. Though we are born rational beings, and likewise with feelings that do honour to our nature, it is surprising to consider, how little the majority of mankind are actuated, in their lives, by reason and sentiment.

Angling is one of the favourite rural diversions. Now I wish that any person who delights in this amusement, would suppose, and therefore, in some degree, feel himself, in the situation of that animal with which he cruelly sports; that he would suppose himself inhumanly dragged along in his own element, and deprived of life by that fatigue and pain, which extremely entertain *him*, in his aquatick prey. If his mind frequently and seriously surveys this imagery; and if he is possessed of that humanity which truly

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characterizes a man, he will never angle more.

Against shooting there could be no objection, moral or religious, if it always immediately killed it's object. But we know that this is not the case. It's victim must often, of necessity, languish for a long time in misery. But a truly humane person, if he carefully examined his trespasses on humanity, would rather give up his most agreeable amusement, than cause *one* poor bird (which falls not to the ground without the observance of its Creator) to languish, and to die, of famine and of pain.

The barbarity of hunting is so evident ; it so powerfully invades the eye, and the ear, that it needs not a circumstantial representation. The innocent and timid nature of the hare ; its affecting, its deplorable cry, when it suffers its violent death from its merciless murderers ; would excite a most effectual commiseration in the breast of any animal in human shape,

shape, that was not long habituated, that was not totally devoted to a savage and riotous life. Though the qualities of the fox, when they reside in the human frame, are peculiarly detestable and baneful in society, yet I could wish even that *this* animal was deprived of life in an easier way than by a long chase, and a cruel death. But alas ! why should I waste a word in favour of the fox, when the beauty and amiable majesty of the stag, the sharpness of his grief, the tenderness of his sentiments, and his *human* tears, are all eloquent for him, in vain !—He is pursued with long and unrelenting eagerness ; he is torne, he is mangled, and he dies, amidst the congratulating yells and shouts of dogs and men. On account of the heroic atchievement, the festal board is crowned by his Scythian assassins ; and his obsequies are celebrated in songs of triumph and exultation.—Oh ! merciful God ! man was formed by *thy* benevolent hand, gentle and humane ! But how has

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he degenerated by his own fashions, habits, and institutions ! What a monster hath he made of himself, by the insolence of power, and the contagion of example !

In our vile metropolis, where every vice is peculiarly gigantick, bold, and licentious, the *useful* animals are exposed to many persecutions, and to much tyranny, which I will most agreeably hope, are unfrequent in the remoter counties. In our metropolis, the piercing cries of the friendly dog proclaim the intemperate severity of some human tyrant. There, the same animal is unnecessarily, is wantonly driven over ; and perhaps not killed on the spot, but miserably maimed. What feeling heart, without the keenest grief, and the warmest indignation, can see the horse, that most useful, generous, and noble animal, expiring in the street by unmerited blows, and fatigue ; or dragging an unmerciful weight, with tottering step and haggard eye ; and thus doomed to prolong an existence of mute and unregarded anguish !

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The ox, and the sheep, of honest and inoffensive natures, after having been expelled from their hospitable and pleasing quiet and verdure, and forced into the tumult and noise of the town, feel the terrible change, dreadfully aggravated by the violent impatience of their drivers. Sons keep pace with their fathers, and proclaim by their manners, in very early life, after what models they are formed. The precipitate, wild, and agonizing effects, that are produced by ingenious art, on the useful and engaging animals which are domesticated and familiarized to the human kind, are capital objects of mirth to our youth;—to the rising generation of barbarians.

Now, can any thing more perspicuously demonstrate the insensibility, the obduracy of mankind to external misery, than that all this notorious tyranny over the animal creation, is totally neglected by those who are vested with a power, greatly to restrain it's wantonness and malignity? Could the

greatest orator, or poet, write a severer satire on the human race, than by observing, that the senators of a civilized and enlightened nation have omitted to issue some rigid and salutary edict, to guard and protect the animal world; and that this omission exactly corresponds with the mass of their laws, which are too lavishly praised by their unreflecting countrymen, and which are almost totally calculated to secure their lives, their properties, and their pleasures. If our first minister of state* was eminently characterized by a compassionate and equitable disposition, he would propose a bill for the generous purposes which have employed *my* humble thoughts, instead of opening his budgets upon us, which only let out rapacity and oppression on a disgraced and impoverished kingdom.

* This Sermon was written and preached during the administration of Lord North. After his late political conduct, the least apology for the freedom which I have here used with him, would be ridiculously superfluous, and most despicably mean.

kingdom. Our Parliament, indeed, could not very modestly, and consistently, provide against the cruelties I have mentioned, which, in the capital, pass every day under the eye of our legislators; unless at the same time, they circumscribed the licentiousness of our rural sports; to which, on the contrary, they have given the sanction of the game-laws; a code which, with a Turkish partiality and rigour, confines the prerogative of waging a pusillanimous war with animals, to the landholders; and which, as a late excellent commentator on the laws of England, very justly and liberally remarks, for the selfish and inhuman spirit by which it was framed, would disgrace the petty States of Barbary.

If laws were established for the purposes which I am espousing, and which every truly humane and good man would wish to see established, many persons would vehemently remonstrate against such daring encroachments on their liberty;—against

their being deprived of their favourite exercises and diversions. Without endeavouring to revive the love of books, which, if well chosen, afford us our most rational and noblest entertainment; but the *mention* of which offends and shocks that glittering insect, a man of fashion;—therefore, without recommending *them*, are there not many diversions and amusements, which, while they are not injurious to the animal-creation, are very entertaining, nay very useful, and improving to the mind? They who should fancy that it was impossible for a man to exist without his usual sanguinary sports, would certainly likewise fancy, that it was impossible for him to emancipate himself from immoral habits; and would forget, that we are endowed with the intellectual faculty, and with innocent and agreeable imagination. The sportsman insists, that his health and pleasure depend on the misery and destruction of partridges and pheasants, hares and deer. An ignorant and insolent

insolent Creole thinks *he* staggers an advocate for humanity to our own species, when he tells him, with emphasis and importance, that Europe could not be supplied with two articles of superfluity and luxury, and that *he* could not grow enormously rich, unless he was allowed to make slaves of the poor Africans;—to beat them, when they were deficient in performing the most oppressive drudgery; and to cut off their arms or legs, or terminate their calamitous existence, when they were driven to natural, but desperate resources, to recover their liberty. The sportsman and the Jamaica planter reason equally well: But the logic which *they* fancy to be cogent and conclusive, is refuted and annihilated by *one* generous emotion of the heart.

I hope you will not think me tedious, if I dwell rather particularly on the objects which I proposed to consider; if I am industrious to combat a selfish obduracy.

Horse-racing and cock-fighting, * are extremely reprehensible diversions, in a moral and religious view. A concise description of the latter sport is a proof of its barbarity. When the subjects of a cultivated community bring two brave animals together, that are only to be vanquished by death ; when their ingenuity is exerted to make the inflexible courage of those animals fatal to its possessors ; when they substitute artificial and destructive, for natural and innoxious weapons ; when they irritate courage and intrepidity to madness ; and when, for *their* amusement, and to gratify their licentious and rapacious thirst for gain, the unhappy combatant expires in the turbulence of passion, and in the extremity of pain ; when *this* is the recreation of a cultivated community, let us adopt the theory of the illustrious citizen of Geneva ; let us not seek

* I observe, with pleasure, that cock-fighting, throwing at cocks, and bull-baiting, are not such favourite amusements of my countrymen, as they were half a century ago.

seek for humanity and virtue amidst the sciences and fine arts ; but in the bosom of peaceful ignorance, and in the venerable forests of savage life.

Though horse-racing is not so evidently cruel as the sport on which I have just animadverted, its effects are certainly inhuman. The generous nature of the animal must always suffer by too eager and rapid an exertion ; and both the horse and the rider are exposed to violent and fatal accidents. All those whose minds are impressed with a proper sense of religion and decorum, must wish to see these two diversions proscribed, when I remind them of the villainy, of the impious and blasphemous language ; of the universal debauchery and profligacy, which are their inseparable concomitants.

Men who are addicted to these amusements, are, in general, very superficial reasoners. To justify their pursuits, they tell you, that the animals themselves are fond of the contests which are promoted by the gentlemen of the turf and the cock-

cock-pit. But as we were appointed by Heaven to be the rulers of this lower world, we ought certainly to be its gentle and merciful rulers ; and therefore, we ought to restrain any excesses of those animals that are under our care, which are painful and ruinous to their existence. They who vindicate the sports above-mentioned, by urging the ardour of the animal for those horrid conflicts, may, with parity of argument, assert, that we may innocently indulge, or encourage, the caprice, the passions, and extravagancies of our children, or of any other persons, whom it is our duty to instruct and to protect. The importance of the objects, I own, is very different ; but the reasoning is equally inconclusive and absurd.

One strong inducement to treat animals well, and kindly, is the returns they make us for that treatment. When we shew them that mildness, that care, that tenderness, which they deserve for their own sakes, and from a proper reverence of that Being by whom they were created, how amiably,
how

how charmingly do they exhibit their natures;—I had almost said, their *virtues*! The behaviour of the dog alone, that most grateful, most affectionate, and most constant friend; *his* behaviour to a good master, should redeem his fellow-animals from unnecessary thralldom and pain. He will not desert that master in the worst emergency; in the meanest and most mortifying circumstances. Though he is pleased with splendour, as well as animals are of a superiour form, he will follow his companion and benefactor, from a palace to a garret or a dungeon. Cold and famine will not cool his attention; will not tear him from the bosom of his friend. With all the possible ardour of sympathy, he repeats the sigh, and he returns the tear of distress. His attitudes, his caresses, and his eye, you may infallibly interpret into the following language: “Though you
 “are forsaken by the world, you shall
 “never be forsaken by *me*. To tear me
 “from *you*, would be tearing me from
 “myself. By having *my* poor society,
 “you

“you will, at least, not be in total solitude.
“I will participate all your woes; and
“if I survive you, I will die upon your
“grave.”—This picture is not drawn by
romantick imagination; all its essential
strokes are well-known truths of natural
history. And if we contemplate the cha-
racter of this animal, this perfect model
of love and fidelity; and compare it with
our own qualities and conduct; with
our selfishness, ingratitude, perfidy, and
barbarity; ought we not to be over-
whelmed with shame and confusion?—
Ought we not to feel extreme regret for
any outrages we may have committed on
the animal-creation? And ought we not
to resolve to atone for those outrages, as
much as possible, for the time to come,
by being their attentive guardians and
protectors?

For the freedom of animadversion which
flows through this discourse, I shall make
no apology: For in using that freedom, I
thought I was discharging an important
duty to God and Man, and to inferiour
beings;

beings ; which, however, are susceptible of pain and pleasure, of happiness and misery. If I have been too prolix, I am sure you will pardon a prolixity which originated and kept on, from my detestation of all cruelty. To turn the tide of custom, of passion, and of pleasure, is a labour more than Herculean ; and therefore not to be atchieved by *my* weak endeavours. But if I win *one* heart from barbarous practices ; if my fair and unexaggerated representation of facts, makes the existence of *one* animal more comfortable and happy, I shall not think that I have lived and written in vain.

My disinterestedness, too, in the low, worldly sense of the word, in venturing to discuss this subject, will, I flatter myself, obtain your excuse for any thing erroneous that may have escaped me. I have been pleading the cause of the weak, the innocent, and the helpless, against wealth, and insolence, and power.

I beg leave to remind you of one christian proposition, which is authenticated
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in almost every page of the Gospel; viz. If any mortal is to have the supreme honour and felicity of being seated near the Son of God, at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore, it is the benevolent, the generous, the industriously and universally beneficent man.—And if, in a state of future retribution, there is a punishment *particularly* severe, it is reserved for the obdurate and the inhumane.*

S E R-

* To mention here some remarks that were made on this discourse, may be entertaining to the reader. The grave comments of the vulgar, on the doctrine which they hear from the pulpit, often excite, at once our compassion and risibility. Some of the lower class of the inhabitants of Richmond, where I preached this Sermon, were asked, how they liked it? One shrugged up his shoulders, and said, *it was a good animal Sermon.*-----Another, that it was a good *hunting* Sermon. But by a timid and despicable Priest, in the neighbourhood of Richmond, who ought to have learned to judge more justly and liberally of human conduct, I was pronounced to be *a weak man*, for vindicating the cause of humanity and of God, against the tyranny of custom, and against the insolence and barbarity of wealth and power.

S E R M O N V.

ON THE FORGIVENESS OF INJURIES.

MATT. CH. XVIII. VERSES 21, 22.

THEN CAME PETER TO HIM, AND SAID,
LORD, HOW OFT SHALL MY BROTHER SIN
AGAINST ME, AND I FORGIVE HIM? TILL
SEVEN TIMES?—JESUS SAITH UNTO HIM,
I SAY NOT UNTO THEE, UNTIL SEVEN TIMES;
BUT UNTIL SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN.

THE meaning of the text may be easily collected from it's words. But I shall beg leave to offer you it's full explanation, as the precepts of christianity cannot be too accurately ascertained.

Peter, in the simplicity and openness of his heart, but desirous to have some scope left for Jewish prejudices, and the too common disposition of human nature

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to repentment, asked our Saviour *when* he might cease to forgive an offending brother, and prosecute guilt with revenge; or at least, entertain a hatred to the offending person? The answer of Christ may be thus enlarged and illustrated:

“ You know nothing of the benevo-
“ lent and merciful spirit that actuates
“ me, and *my* religion. Far be it from *me*
“ to limit your forgiveness of injuries. I
“ say not unto thee, until seven times;
“ but until seventy times seven. All
“ men are frail; and they will, one day,
“ be accountable to my Father, who
“ alone is completely acquainted with all
“ the motions and operations of the
“ heart and mind. Therefore, it will be
“ greatly conducive to your own welfare
“ and happiness, and to the welfare and
“ happiness of society, that you forgive
“ not only all doubtful or trivial, but
“ all certain and grievous injuries. The
“ Disciples of the New Testament are
“ to exalt and extend their practice be-
“ yond all private and public prejudices,
“ and

“ and passions : Their sentiments towards
 “ men, that is, towards their brethren,
 “ must be as genial and diffusive as the
 “ sun.”

If ever a teacher of pure and sublime morality, had a most explicit and palpable right to inculcate this noble doctrine, it was the Authour and the Finisher of our moral faith. It's Authour, by constantly preaching peace on earth, good will and good deeds towards men ;—by forgiving the most heinous offences of an humble and penitent criminal, with a gentle, but significant rebuke ;—“ go, and sin no more, “ lest a worse thing befall thee ;”—and by bearing, though a personage far above potentates and kings, the most exasperating insults and contempt, with unconquerable meekness and resignation :—And it's glorious Finisher, by breathing a well-known ejaculation to the Throne of Heaven, when he was expiring in the most excruciating agony, and amid the scorn and taunts of an obdurate and inhuman
 I nation :—

nation:—"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

It is surprising, and it is melancholy too, to reflect, that notwithstanding the innumerable passages in the New Testament, that are fraught with mildness, forgiveness, and benevolence, and that are similar to the text I have chosen, the majority of men in all ages, and countries, who have professed Christianity, whether we consider them as nations, or societies, or individuals, have totally perverted, or totally mistaken the tenour and the spirit of our religion. Ruthless inquisitors have been so far from forgiving injuries, that they have burned at the stake thousands of their brethren, because they differed from them, in their attempt to explain some inexplicable mystery; or perhaps because they differed from them in the meaning of a word. The Popes, in former ages (I thank God, their power is *now* almost sufficiently circumscribed) the Popes, who pretended to be the Vicars, the immediate, and
Heaven-

Heaven-appointed successors of our merciful Master, and to open the gates of paradise; sent forth, without remorse, their sanguinary edicts; lighted up the torch of war between rival monarchs; and (inconsistent, and horrible to tell!) under the banner of the cross, deluged the world with blood!

But impartiality and justice oblige me to remark, that, in the spirit of violence and persecution, there have been more Antichrists than one. The warmth of the Protestant Reformers, of the Luthers, the Calvins, and the Knoxes, though they were, in many respects, great and good men, often rose to an intemperate and destructive heat; they sometimes seemed intent rather to extirpate than reform. All, I am sure, who hear me, are alive to humanity; and when I inform them that Servetus, for mere points of opinion, was condemned to the flames by the influence of Calvin, they will, doubtless, agree with me, that this one act of gloomy and in-

exorable cruelty, at least, equiponderated all the merit of that great scholar and divine. Here we may be happy to reflect, that the excellent Church of England, even in the plenitude of it's power, was far less marked with austerity and persecution than it's immediate opponents, who then affected, and who still continue to affect, extreme simplicity, and humility of manners.

The relentless temper and practice which I have been endeavouring to display, without any exaggeration, are, I fear, applicable to smaller societies, to individuals of every country, and of the present times. Implacable animosities often arise between those who called themselves reciprocal friends, from mere trifles, or from ill-grounded reports; and with an unconquerable acrimony, which is only worthy of the savage Indians, we often transmit our permanent disgusts and hatreds to our posterity, with our better legacies. And yet, if one was hardy
enough

enough to tell a person who pursued such gross misconduct, that his soul was not warmed with a particle of the vitals of Christianity, he would not only deny the charge with indignation, but, in all probability, and consistently with the rest of his manners, never forgive you for your honest, but harsh freedom. One would think, that nine tenths of the Christian world imagined, that they would settle their accounts with God Almighty, by keeping their moral and religious books with the exactness of a Dutch merchant; not by doing one act of generosity and magnanimity, but by being sober and discreet, and regular, and punctual; by going always to church at the stated times; by hearing sermons, and mechanically repeating prayers.

Believe me, it is with no pleasure that I exhibit so unfavourable a picture of mankind. If your observation and experience coincide with what I have advanced, I flatter myself you will not suspect that a

cynical misanthropy was my motive for this language. I thought it useful and pertinent to the objects which will come under my consideration. I shall now pass to more agreeable scenes; to the reasonableness and propriety of a mild and forgiving temper and conduct. And I shall propose some characters, which are justly celebrated for this amiable and god-like disposition and habit, to your virtuous and noble emulation. From the natural perspicuity of the subject, my observations cannot be ingenious or new; nor am I ambitious to have them so. All the maxims and directions relative to human conduct, that are most useful and beneficial, that *come home to men's business and bosoms*, are not drawn from the bottom of that well, where philosophical truths are said to lie immersed, in darkness, and in the deep. Even the excellence of the proverbs of Solomon, like that of other salutary and divine axioms, consists not in the display of intellectual art and invention,

vention, but in their great importance in the regulation of our lives.

To prove that it is highly proper to forgive an injury, when the forgiveness is solicited, and that in such a case, it is mean and base to withhold a pardon, needs little discussion. An unrelenting temper, when we have injured another, or when we have received an injury, is a sure mark of timidity and pusillanimity. It betrays a consciousness that our importance, and in a great measure, our happiness, depends on *one* unfortunate event; and that we can only derive consequence from fullness and obstinacy. But the generous man is not only willing, but ardent, and impatient to forgive, or to ask forgiveness, as the occasion requires. His understanding, as well as his heart, proclaims to him, that it is manly and noble to acknowledge, or to remit, a trespass. He knows, and he feels, that *his* dignity is incompatible with an ungenerous reserve, or a pertinacious disdain; and that it is con-

stituted by innate, permanent, and luminous qualities; by the bright and vigorous complexion and character of his mind.

If the offender and the offended were, in general, anxious for a reconciliation, how different would the situation of man be from what it is, in our sublunary state! How many latent and consuming fevers of the soul; how many ruinous litigations; how many dreadful outrages would be avoided, that agitate and tear this contentious and tumultuous world! Nor would mere peace, a calm tranquillity, be the only effect of this open and generous disposition:—It would produce more prominent and positive consequences:—Commerce, knowledge, all that enriches, polishes, and ennobles mankind, would be more diffusively cultivated, encouraged, and improved. Social harmony and affection, the best soothers of our pains, and refiners of our pleasures, would spread
their

their influence, and give a brightness and energy to the current of life.

I shall mention another obvious motive for our easy forgiveness of injuries; the universal infirmity of human nature. I am far from being so illiberal as to suppose, that there are not many who are truly and eminently virtuous, in a weak and bad world. But if, after the mature investigation, reflexions, and writings, of the greatest philosophers and divines, during many centuries, we may venture to pronounce that human nature is understood; we may likewise assert, that the best man, on a retrospect through his past life, will find in it so many deviations from moral rectitude; so many descents below the standard of the gospel; that the generosity of his nature and habits will always prompt him to view the failings of his neighbour with tenderness; his faults with compassion; and even his crimes with lenity.

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The reasonableness and propriety of forgiving injuries, will be farther illustrated and enforced on our minds, if we take a comprehensive view of our temporary state; of the uncertainties and changes; of the cares, and disappointments, and pains, which fill the small, but unfortunate space. A survey of the transitory and humiliating state of our existence here, will certainly moderate all our passions, in every ingenuous and thinking mind, and especially that of revenge. Casualties and misconduct often bring our most avowed enemies into so deplorable a situation, that we feel a very sensible pain for their miseries, unless we are absolutely degenerated into barbarians. If we happen, in the maturity of our manhood, to revisit a place where we have passed many of our early days, with what melancholy, with what mortifying objects, are our senses and imagination impressed! We are struck with a revolution in human existence:—We see a new succession of short lived, but of rational and immortal beings, who

who now flourish on the stage of life, and who warn *us*, with an awful memento, that we are fast advancing towards eternity. Of our former acquaintance and friends, many sleep in the peaceful grave, unmolested with any baleful passion. Of some of those acquaintance and friends, the iron hand of adversity hath cut the thread of life. Some are estranged from us by caprice, or by a natural forgetfulness of the absent; or perhaps by our own demerit. To extend our speculation beyond any one spot, and to give it the range of a nation, we are often pained with the sight of prosperous and exulting vice, and (what is far more exquisitely painful to our hearts, if they are good) with the sight of afflicted virtue. If we are as inquisitive as we ought to be, into the most useful of human studies, the history of man, we may find *the good distressed, the noble-minded few*, in some obscure and inhospitable corner, unheeded by the rich, the thoughtless, and the gay; yet holding a glorious conflict

conflict with agony of mind, and dropping the tear of unutterable sentiment ! When a mind of any manly sensibility pictures to himself such interesting scenes as these, can his own petty wrongs rankle in his heart ; can he think of revenging them ? Will he not cordially forgive a perishable and miserable being, all it's childish and tormenting machinations ; all it's puny and momentary assaults ? Will he presume to redress his own little grievances, at the expence of his tranquillity of mind, and of his moral duty, when he views with an attentive and religious eye this vast collision of accident and vice, this apparent chaos of pain and pleasure, of happiness and misery ?—To such a man, as the Supreme Being is, without doubt, a just one, this very chaos cries aloud, that there must be an hereafter ; and therefore he resignedly and cheerfully submits his cause to that Being, Whose omniscience enables him, with infallibility, to approve and to condemn ; and whose omnipotence will,
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one day, harmonize confusion into the most beautiful order, and make *all partial evil universal good.*

I do not mean particularly to persuade a congregation whom I respect, to the practice of a capital moral, and religious duty, by any sordid or inferiour motives. But we may think ourselves fortunate, if we can prevail with men to act well, even from the lower modifications of self-love. If, therefore, on the great subject under our consideration, we cannot be actuated by pure and sublime motives, let us be determined by our *pride* to forgive injuries: For let us reflect, that in the act of such forgiveness, we are vested, for the time, with a kind of dictatorial power: One of our equals is brought before our tribunal; and we dispense to him justice and equity. And let us likewise reflect, that if we are slow to forgive injuries, we betray our own weakness; we proclaim to the world, that our peace of mind, that our *happiness*, is
greatly

greatly dependent on the conduct of another. For if we are obstinately implacable, the offender must have given us extreme pain.

As collective bodies; as societies, as well as in our relation to one-another, as individuals, we should treat the trespasses of our neighbour with candour and humanity. When a man's virtue is in danger of being totally shipwrecked, we should by no means turn from him with a barbarous contempt; but we should lend a compassionate and friendly hand, to rescue him from the gulph of vice, as long as there is the least hope that he can be saved. When we hear people severe, and clamorous against the vices of others, I believe it is not unchristian to suspect, that their ardour is affected and ostentatious, and that they have little virtue themselves. Let us ever remember, my fellow-christians, that many an ingenuous mind, which was by no means confirmed in profligacy, has been driven to despair and ruin by the
ill-timed

ill-timed and cruel coldness of it's acquaintance and pretended friends. There are but a few heroes of consummate courage, who can look with intrepidity in the face of a frowning world, who can shake off the load of young debauch; who never lose sight of the noble objects of their early pursuits; who confide in the good effects of their own manly exertion, and in the providence of God.

I would not wish you to think, from all that I have advanced, that I mean to make the true Christian that indolent, passive, and squalid slave, that he is painted by some of his mistaken advocates, or insidious enemies. There are occasions when his calmness may be irritated to ardour, nay even to a laudable indignation. Let him show his resentment to impudent, to incorrigible and hardened vice;—let him be active to procure it's punishment. But let his resentment never be impelled by partial and selfish views; let it always be directed to the good of the criminal and of mankind. Our Saviour, you know, lashed
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the miscreants who profaned the temple. So is it always lawful, evangelically lawful, to lash vice in *general*, and sometimes in *personal* terms. He who makes culprits, *who 'scape the laws, hear, and tremble*, deserves well of society. I trust it will not be deemed either erroneous or irreverent to assert, that the manly and poignant satires of Mr. Pope were productive of publick good (I mean as far as the influence of the poet extends and) proportionably with the sermons of Archbishop Tillotson, in the superiour and more venerable province of theology. If we are to give no play to the passions, adieu to the fine arts, which, in their natural tendency, humanize the heart, and enlarge the mind; adieu to all the colouring and spirit of life.

I shall now propose, as I intended, some illustrious examples of the virtue which I have been endeavouring to inculcate, to your generous emulation. You can have no objection to a model or two from the heathen world; because

because on that very account, the remembrance to Christians will be the stronger.

Cicero, in his oration for Ligarius, says of the magnanimous Cæsar, that he forgot nothing but injuries. A finer compliment was, perhaps, never paid to any one by an orator. But it was better than fine; it was true. Cæsar had too great a soul to maintain any contest, any hostilities, but for the empire of the world.

If any thing good can come from France, let us make a good use of it. A Duke of Orleans, soon after he had mounted the French Throne, was reminded, by one of those fiends who are always pouring poison into the ear of Majesty, that he had a notorious enemy in his dominions:—"A King of France", replied the monarch, "ought not to revenge the cause of a Duke of Orleans."

The excellent Adrian, before he succeeded to the Roman Empire, had an active and implacable enemy, who, with every opportunity, attempted his ruin. Of

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this man he had determined to be revenged. But soon after he was proclaimed Emperor ; soon after the life of every Roman subject was at his absolute disposal ; he was heard to cry out in a soliloquy, and undoubtedly with his enemy in his mind, —“ Now thou hast escaped me.”—In a trying juncture, one action, or one expression, may determine the character.—Adrian, by his glorious behaviour on this occasion, showed that he was worthy to preside in Rome ; the seat of empire, the mistress of the world.

I have hitherto reserved, in the order of my discourse, a particular appeal, to enforce a mild and salutary doctrine, to the highest authority, to the authority of Heaven. To corroborate my arguments for a mild and forgiving temper, by many quotations from scripture, would be totally superfluous. My text itself is a sufficient substitute for a hundred sacred passages. The whole tenour of the gospel, and the whole life of Christ, are inspired and characterized by an unlimited and ardent benevolence,

volence. Let us, however, particularly remember, that in the Prayer which our Saviour recommended to our use, we absolutely petition God, not to forgive us *our* offences, unless *we* forgive the offences of our neighbour. And that article of our Lord's most excellent Prayer, he himself enforces with a very distinct and home comment.—“ For (says he) if ye forgive
 “ men *their* trespasses, your Heavenly Father
 “ will also forgive *you* : But if ye forgive
 “ not men *their* trespasses, neither will
 “ your Father forgive *your* trespasses.”—
 Matt. chap. vi. v. 14, 15.

I pretend not to have urged any new motives, or arguments, for acquiring a mild and forgiving disposition and habit of mind. Indeed, as soon as that disposition and habit are particularly mentioned, they must win the heart, and convince the understanding. I only flatter myself that I have set the topicks by which they have been often recommended, in a perspicuous and fair light. The most im-

portant considerations, sublunary and celestial, press them upon our practice. If the latter, and superiour objects, have too weak a hold of our minds, let us, at the worst, be determined by the former. For I am sure you are all satisfied, that to arm our hearts and minds, by a noble morality and religion, against any deep wounds from injuries, and consequently, easily to pardon those by whom the injuries are committed, will always greatly contribute, even in our present state, to our interest, our dignity, and our happiness: And these are the three grand objects which animate our wishes, form our cares, and invigorate our labours.

S E R M O N VI.

PREACHED ON CHRISTMAS DAY, 1778, AT
GROSVENOR-CHAPEL.

ISAIAH, CHAP. LIII. PART OF VERSE 3.

HE IS DESPISED AND REJECTED OF MEN; A
MAN OF SORROWS, AND ACQUAINTED WITH
GRIEF.

ISAIAH is justly distinguished, on two accounts, by the title of the Evangelical Prophet; for his remarkable prefigurations of the Messiah, which are so accurate, that they have rather the appearance of a historical narrative than of what, in fact, they are, a series of prophecy; and for his generous and exalted morality, which was far superiour to the tenour of the Jewish Code; and breathed the diffusive, the humane, and amiable spirit of the Christian dispensation. In the chapter which contains my text, the

abject situation, and the glory; the sufferings, and exaltation of our Saviour, are painted in so striking colours, that the different, the opposite images which they convey, are applicable to none but Christ.

But Isaiah's countrymen were not at all adapted to imbibe the spirit, and to be improved by the writings of their Prophet. They were people of gross minds and affections. They are, at once, monuments and living examples of the lenity, and justice of God. They would never admit, that their king was to be a poor persecuted being. They could not imagine that any princely excellence was inherent in him, who was not strengthened with wealth and armed with power. And one may observe, without being liable to the imputation of misanthropy, that human nature has, in all ages and nations, been, in this respect, too much of a Jewish complexion. We are all too much led by prejudice and the senses. Those virtues and talents which reside with rank and

and fortune, charm us extremely, if they are but moderately bright; they derive, indeed, only a reflected, but a great and seducing lustre, from the splendour with which they are surrounded. But the best qualities of the heart, and the noblest endowments of the mind, lose more than half of their value, to the superficial observation of mankind, by the poverty of their possessors.

The intention of all true religion is, to influence and fix the conduct; to form us for public and private life. In the discharge of those duties, which immediately take the epithet religious, there must be established forms and ceremonies. For besides *that* order and harmony, which, without them, cannot be maintained in any public assembly, these forms and ceremonies, if they are well instituted, dispose our minds for an attention to pious offices; produce that decorum, that degree of the beautiful and venerable, which prepare us, as far as human creatures can

be made worthy to converse with the Deity, for a communication with God.

So likewise our meeting at stated times (as on this memorable and sacred occasion) to celebrate peculiar and eminent mercies of Heaven, will, we may reasonably hope, be generally attended with salutary consequences; it will inspire us with a fervent gratitude to the Supreme Being; it will renew our good dispositions, and strengthen our good habits and resolutions.

This is the great aim and use of all religious institutions and solemnities. They are only to be observed and revered, as they promote a manly and practical piety; as they extricate us from the narrow labyrinths of selfishness, and impell us to study and effect the good of our neighbours, of our country, and of mankind.

Therefore, instead of wasting your time, as is too much the custom at anniversaries like this, on objects of pure speculation; instead of attempting to prove the miraculous conception, birth, and divinity of Christ,

Christ, which is but an awkward compliment to professors of Christianity, I shall beg leave to suggest some reflections and determinations that we may form from the words of the text, which, while they forewarned the world, in the sober majesty of prophetick language, informed it, with historical truth, that our Saviour was *despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.*

As our Saviour was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; as in *Him* resided the power of the Divinity, which enabled him to command the scenes of the lower world; and as he is in scripture proposed to *us* for an example, as far as human nature can imitate the divine, we may with certainty infer, that an unreflecting, gay, dissipated life, which is commonly called a life of pleasure, is totally incompatible with the system of conduct that should be pursued by a Disciple of Christ. I do not mean to imply, that we should invite and encounter the evils which were suffered by
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the Authour and Finisher of our faith. The patience and power with which, from the manger to the cross, *He* endured want, persecution, insults, and the most excruciating torture, proved Him a Being of superiour nature to the greatest mere philosopher that ever did honour to human nature. They made *Him* a perfect example of virtue and piety; but *our* most heroic virtue and piety must always be shaded with much imperfection. Besides, distresses and pains were necessary to be suffered by Christ and his Apostles, which were not to be entailed on their followers, in the milder ages of Christianity: For the propagating of a new religion was unavoidably to meet with persecution; especially of a religion that was framed on purpose to counteract the prejudices and bad habits of mankind; their love of power and splendour; and their licentious indulgences in sensual pleasure. I know that it has been maintained, and I know that it is yet maintained, by very respectable writers, that
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the Christian ought to lead a life of continual self-denial and mortification; and that his mind should be totally indifferent to sublunary affairs. This doctrine was excusable two centuries ago; but it seems *now* to be very inconsistent with good sense and learning; for by the abolition of bigotry from all liberal education, and by our great improvements in all useful and ornamental knowledge, we have greatly improved in our knowledge of the scriptures. Therefore I humbly apprehend, that a true Christian may, within certain bounds, participate the employments and pleasures of a cultivated and refined age and nation. He may be ambitious of excelling in the fine arts; he may practise a courtly politeness; and he may enjoy the fashionable amusements of his time; for all these objects may be pursued, as a good man will pursue them, without violating reason or truth, or the laws of our country; and therefore without violating the rules of Christianity. In short, his business and his pleasures may amicably

cably blend with the genius of the age in which he lives.

To rail at the rich, and all the enjoyments which riches procure, seems rather to proceed from the disposition of a Cynick than from that of a Minister of the mildest religion in the world. People of large fortunes have an *evangelical* right to enjoy all the blessings which Providence hath put in their power (let them only, by the use of reason, judge what objects really *are* blessings) provided they are humane, and exemplary heads of families; provided they are industrious to find and to relieve the *good Distressed*, and to reward merit in poverty and obscurity. And they may do these excellent offices without depriving themselves of elegance and splendour: And if they discharge these offices, a splendour will be reflected on their characters, and they will enjoy a durable and noble pleasure, which from any other application of wealth never can result.

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But let us still recollect, that though it is not incumbent on us to court the hard destiny of our divine Master; though it is not incumbent on us to be despised, and rejected of men; to be men of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; yet if we pass too much of our life with a thoughtless and effeminate mind; in gay trifles, and unmeaning mirth; we shall chuse to be conversant with objects which are in the extreme from those that were the choice of our Saviour; and therefore we *must* be wrong.

This is a season of sociality and festivity; and they are very allowable, very good relaxations; they are very laudable relaxations, properly used; for they contribute to augment and fix the best affections. Our friendships are warmed, increased, and established, by our mutual pleasures, as well as by our mutual pains. Our Saviour ate, and drank, and conversed, promiscuously; and his conversation was, I make no doubt, often illuminated with cheer.

cheerfulness and innocent gaiety. We shall find nothing that is austere, nothing that is hostile to genuine pleasure, in *his* religion, unless we erroneously honour with that title, the comments of Puritans and Carthusians.

But let us not *forget Jerusalem* in our *mirth*. Let our festivity, at this, and at other seasons, be a tempered festivity ; otherwise we shall very materially injure ourselves and the community. Let religious ideas particularly mix with our pleasures at *this* time ;—let us remember, and with a pious gratitude, that at *this* time, the Son of God himself came into the world to redeem us from the penalties which we had incurred by our vices and crimes ; and to teach us the simplest, yet the sublimest morality that was ever proposed to mankind ; that he enjoined us, for our lasting happiness, as well as for our true temporary enjoyment, the absolute government of our appetites and passions ; and that *his* rigorous destiny

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on earth was contempt, rejection, and grief.

Permit me to observe, without any fordid flattery, that this precaution, which is meant to temper the sociality of the season, has very little reference to the congregation which I now have the honour to address ; but, alas ! it is too applicable to the inferiour classes of men, especially in this great and dissolute metropolis ; to those who, happily for themselves, as well as for the state, are under a necessity of subsisting by their industry ; who, before our great religious festivals arrive, eagerly anticipate the joys of liberty ; and to many of whom, even that transient liberty, by its being perverted into licentiousness, proves their absolute destruction.

From the comprehensive and melancholy account of our Saviour's life in the text, we may draw another humane and generous inference, viz. that we should often, in proportion to our power to do good, inquire into the history of our neighbours,

bours, who are in a poor and mean situation; that we should often turn to them a compassionate eye, and stretch forth a friendly hand to relieve their pressing wants, and to heal the more painful wounds of their minds. Indeed, in all ranks of life, our misfortunes and miseries are generally produced by our own misconduct; the general, I mean the natural effects of virtue, are health, competence, and happiness. But such rude and heavy obstacles are frequently laid in our way, at our setting forth into the world, that it may be extremely difficult, nay totally impracticable, to emerge into an easy and pleasant road; and when we have proceeded for some time on our journey, so various and so complicated are the accidents of life, that the united merit of heart, and talents, and industry, may be irremediably defeated. The best, therefore;—every way the most deserving of men, may be overwhelmed with calamity. And if we have any tender sensibility, or
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any generosity of sentiment, must we not, on a moment's reflection, allow, that we cannot be more worthily employed, nor more to our permanent happiness, than in rescuing such men from the torrent that overpowers them? When people in power (it is no matter in what *sort* of power, whether of office, or of wealth; for so much wealth is so much power) when such people are attentive, and active to protect and establish the characters I have been describing, the voluntary heart, without any servile impulse, pays those benefactors to the human species, an inferior adoration; deems them the vicegerents of God.

They who are in difficult, in distressful circumstances, are apt too severely to inveigh against the coldness of the great to acts of benevolence, without considering how human nature, if left to itself, will necessarily be affected, in its various situations. It is not easy for those who have not themselves been acquainted with sor-

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rows, however good their dispositions are, to feel completely for the unfortunate ;— as they whose senses are blunt, are far less forcibly affected by external objects, than they who are—*endowed*, shall I call it, or —*tormented*, with exquisite sensibility ! If we remark impartially, we shall commonly find, (but I mean not to exclude many noble examples to the contrary) that they who enjoy an affluent fortune, after having long experienced adversity, are most zealous, if their dispositions and habits are good, in relieving the woes of their fellow-creatures. Yet they, whose exalted and splendid sphere is apt to excite the envy of the lower orders in society, may, from their own experience, form no very weak idea of the destiny of the poor and the miserable. For they themselves must, at times, have felt the rigour of the elements, the keenness of hunger, and other yet more excruciating evils, from which no condition is exempted. By calmly recollecting these events,

events, and by exerting the principles of reason and religion, those who have been continually prosperous, may be sufficiently impelled to perform, and undoubtedly often *do* perform, very disinterested and generous actions.

That our dispositions to befriend mankind may be always vigorous, and ready to act, let us, by such recollection, and such principles as I have mentioned, be careful to counteract that contempt which we are all too apt to feel, at the sight of the poor and the helpless. This contempt results from a part of our constitution, which it is our duty to correct by good sentiments and good precepts. We naturally admire strength, and despise weakness. Let us reject the hasty and profane verdict of our senses, whenever it is at war with our humanity, with our practical religion. The unhappy appearance of the poor, is not, by it's first effects, a very powerful advocate in their favour. For we are naturally disgusted with awk-

wardness of manner, and thread-bare apparel; and the eye and the mind are naturally charmed with the agreeable and the elegant. But let me here observe, to the honour of human nature, that this very delicacy of taste, if properly directed, will make us more enamoured with the beauty of active benevolence than of any other object. And whenever disadvantageous appearances are likely to freeze our christian charity, let us remember that our Saviour's progress through life (externals only considered) was as mean, as abject, as can be imagined; that he and his parents were refused the accommodations of a paltry inn; and that his cradle was a manger; that he was always unpopular, hated, persecuted, and despised; that he was never courted and caressed by the great, whose kindness is certainly very flattering to self-love, and very eligible; but that they exerted all their power to mortify, to depress, and to ruin him; and that the humble path

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of life in which *he* chose to tread, is a lesson to *us*, to be prepared rather to respect than despise our unhappy brethren, who, like *him*, are despised, and rejected of men.

If we are properly edified by the history of our Saviour, who, though he was without sin, was accused by his countrymen of heinous crimes against the church and the state; was daily aspersed and vilified; we shall be tender of our neighbour's reputation, though it be generally and vehemently arraigned; recollecting, that, among other cruel accidents of life, the characters of the best of men sometimes become the victims of malevolence and error; and that our great model of every virtue was most inhumanly treated while he lived; and, at length, suffered the death of the vilest malefactor. This humane disposition will inspire us with great lenity to the faults of those who may principally depend on our favour and assistance. And thus we shall probably pre-

vent many crimes, and much misery. For liberal minds are often more precipitately driven on, from imprudences that might be corrected, to despair, and abandoned profligacy, by the ill-timed severity and desertion of their friends, than by their own depravity.

The words of the text will likewise suggest to us, that it should be our great endeavour to secure the enjoyments of a better world; and that we should emancipate ourselves from any unreasonable attachment to this unequal state; where we often see modest worth struggling with want and oppression, and where Christ himself *had not where to lay his head*.

I have endeavoured to inculcate, in this discourse, some of the most important moral truths of our religion, when too much time is often devoted to a mystery. We should not doubt the faith of our hearers; and we should not attempt to explain what is inexplicable. The most unshaken faith, let rash and profane enthusiasts

thusiasts assert what they will, without that active and universal practice which is of service to the world, is of little consequence. *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven.* Mat. ch. vii. v. 21.—Not he who believes all that is revealed in scripture, and who observes all the institutions of the church, with a scrupulous punctuality, is a true disciple of Christ; but he who is just, and temperate, and attentive to those objects that should engage a rational and immortal being;—he who is resigned, on the most trying occasions, to the divine will, and who is indefatigable in promoting the happiness of mankind.

Nor have I particularly dwelt on humanity and generosity to the unfortunate, from a presumptuous and ungenerous doubt that benevolence is wanting within these walls; but because it is the leading characteristick of our most

excellent religion. To enforce, and to diffuse benevolence, was the great end of our Saviour's coming into the world; and therefore it is a pertinent subject for our consideration on this day. *A new commandment I give unto you, says he, that ye love one another.* John, ch. xiii. v. 34. And we are told by St. Paul, Rom. ch. xiii. v. 10. *that love is the fulfilling of the law.*

And in chusing this most amiable topic, I flatter myself that I have corresponded with the strain in which the nativity of our Saviour was celebrated by the Angels, in the hearing of the Shepherds:—*Glory to God in the highest; and on earth, peace, good-will towards men.* Luke, ch. ii. v. 14.

S E R M O N VII.

ON A RELIGIOUS DECORUM OF BEHAVIOUR
DURING THE SERVICE OF THE CHURCH.

ECCLESIASTES, CHAP. I, PART OF VERSE I.

KEEP THY FOOT, WHEN THOU GOEST TO THE
HOUSE OF GOD.

AS the natives of the East are people of a warm and fertile imagination, the writers of that country are very fond of the figurative, or metaphorical style. They like to express the affections of the heart, and the motions and operations of the mind, by corporeal objects, or by other objects of the senses. Thus the expression in the text, “keep thy foot, when thou goest to the House of God,” is not meant of the steadiness of foot with which we are to walk thither, but of the steadiness of

of mind with which we are to approach the House of God. The precept enjoined us in the text may be thus easily and simply paraphrased:—"When you go to the service of the sanctuary, let your mind be properly prepared for that sacred and awful service. You should not only banish every thing trifling and ludicrous from your thoughts, but they should be composed, humble, fervent. You should seriously consider the relation in which you stand to your Creator, when you go to church; and all the grand and amiable attributes of the infinitely great and good Being who hath placed his name there."

The people of the Western World, the inhabitants of Europe, likewise use a figurative manner of conveying their thoughts; though not so profusely as the warm and enthusiastick Orientalists. Agreeably to this mode of expression, (which, indeed, is to be found more or less in all nations and languages) we say, even in common conversation, that a man that has taken a
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rash, or a prudent step ; alluding to some new part of his conduct ; to some new determination of his reason and will. Thus I apprehend, that the meaning of the text is clearly and fully explained ; and you will excuse me, if I have been rather minute in explaining it ; as a sermon should not only be addressed to the cultivated and polished, but also to the illiterate and simple.

The propriety, the indispensable duty, of a collected and devout behaviour at church, will be strongly and perspicuously demonstrated, if we consider the nature of the Supreme Being and our own ; if we take a view of *his* attributes ; of *our* weakness, and dependence on him ; and of the innumerable benefits which we owe to his goodness and mercy.

From *his* benevolence it flows, that we exist ; that we are enlightened by reason and revelation ; and born (if we conduct ourselves by the laws of virtue and religion) to very considerable happiness here, but
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to immortal and unspeakable happiness hereafter. To him we are indebted for all the benefits which in this lower world we enjoy. By *his* parental providence, the spring spreads around us it's charms, and it's useful and salutary productions. The same providence gives us the stronger warmth and fruits of summer; the mildness and the treasures of autumn; and by this perpetual providence, even winter, with all it's inclemency and horrors, is made a social, friendly, and comfortable season. Of what insensibility, of what base and provoking ingratitude are *they* guilty, who coldly and negligently worship the Authour of all these benefits!

If we consider him in the light of our Evangelical Law-giver and Redeemer, our gratitude and piety should be still more purified and exalted. When human reason (though a Deity and Virtue were strongly enforced by that evidence) had left the most illustrious philosophers in perplexity and darkness, on some questions
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of extreme importance to mankind ; the pardon of God to sinners, for instance, and the immortality of the soul ;—these doubts and anxieties were all removed by the glorious light of the gospel. By the life, and doctrine, and sufferings of the Messiah, a most bright example of all virtue and piety was proposed to us ; the purest, the clearest, and the completest rules were given us for our conduct in every situation of life ;—and the sins of mankind were evidently expiated, when *their* virtuous and pious endeavours co-operated with the merits of their Saviour. Here we see God's great love to man ; and how odious immorality and impiety were, in the sight of God. So tender was his love to mankind, that he gave his own Son to die for their sins ;—and so disagreeable was the nature of sin to the divine nature, that it could only be atoned for by the sufferings of a divine person. If we reflect on these examples of God's benevolence to us, in the works of Creation
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and Redemption ; and particularly, if we reflect, that he gave his only Son to suffer a most painful and ignominious death, from his hatred to sin ; and yet from his tender love to *us*, by whom that very sin was committed ; with what composure, with what humility, and fervour of mind, should we go to, or frequent, the House of God ?—And how can we show a more abandoned obduracy, ingratitude, and impiety, than by an inattentive and careless, and (what is still more shocking) by a ludicrous behaviour, in a place consecrated to the immediate and peculiar worship of the first, the greatest, and the most beneficent of beings ?

If we take a more particular survey of his astonishing wisdom and power ; of his stupendous energy in the works of Creation ; the folly and wickedness of showing the least disrespect or irreverence to his worship, will be very palpably and forcibly demonstrated. This great and eternal God ; this *Jehovah* ; this tremendous,

dous, self-existent Being; and this tremendous cause of all existence (whose sacred name even the Jews were so much better Christians than we, as to tremble to mention) this Supreme Being, not only created this globe which *we* inhabit, but likewise all those magnificent luminaries, which, if we are not incorrigibly stupid, we must, in a clear night, survey with admiration. Some of those luminaries which we distinguish with the general name of stars, are the planets, which revolve round *our* sun; but the innumerable number of them are other suns disposed at inconceivable distances, in the infinite regions of space; and attracting, illuminating, and warming other systems of worlds. It is well known, by the progress of *human* science, that two of the planets of *our* system are far larger than this earth: Yet there may be, nay there probably are, amidst the wonders of Creation, many similar bodies, extremely larger even than these planets, and perhaps inhabited by beings
far

far superiour to us in intellectual and moral excellence. What do you think of the comets, those unaccountable, those regularly irregular bodies, if you will allow me the expression, which in the days of ignorance and superstition denounced pestilence and war? From regions perhaps of perpetual frost and darkness, to comprehend the distance of which, eludes and mocks the narrow limits of the human mind, those rare and extraordinary visitants of *our* heavens, advance towards the fountain of light and heat; as they approach its orb they are fired by its rays; and through a vast and unmeasurable tract of æther, they shoot a glorious train of light, astonishing to the eye, but yet more astonishing to the imagination. The eccentric course of these comets, to give you *some* idea of the space which they pervade, is performed in several hundreds of years. When we give a contemplative eye to this majesty of the universe, which is a very august emblem of the majesty of God; even

even the useful, the beautiful, and magnificent sun, which enlightens and revives *our* hemisphere, *hides his diminished head!* His magnitude is lessened, and his splendour is lost, in the multiplicity and immensity of Creation! How is it possible; alas! it is not only possible, but it is true, that such a wretch, that such a worm as man, instead of having his mind strongly impressed with a sense of his own insignificance, and of the greatness of the Deity, often, not only treats with indifference, but even makes a sport of Divine Service; of the service, and in the Temple of that God, who created and arranged all this magnificence, all this celestial array!—I trust so much even to *my* simple and humble account of the Works of Creation, and to the rectitude and goodness of your hearts, that I am sure no generous breast in this congregation, can, at *this* moment, hear me mention this indifference, and most abominable sport, without horror and indignation!—One would think, that

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if a sense of the benefits which are conferred upon us by our Creator, did not properly attach us to his service, the consideration of his power and greatness would strike us with such a forcible, and durable impresson, that we should be always attentive, humble, and earnest, in our devotions to Him, in his Temple. For I am sorry to observe, as the observation is not much to the honour of human nature, that we are far more apt to be awed by the Splendid and the Grand, than to be won by the Benevolent and the Good.

If we consider our own nature, and the relation in which we stand to the Supreme Being, we shall see new arguments why we ought, with David, “to worship, in the
“fear of God, toward his Holy Temple;
“to worship the Lord in the beauty of
“holiness.”—Ps. v. v. 7.—Ps. xxix. v. 2.
The consideration of our nature, of our relation to, and dependence on the Supreme Being, I have, in a great measure, anticipated. Here, therefore, I shall only
beg

beg leave to remind you, that to *Him* we owe our existence and our preservation. We owe our preservation not only to the laws, the sustenance, and to all the supports which he hath assigned us by his general Providence ; but likewise to the paternal effects of his immediate Providence ; to his particular protection and care. To use the words of our excellent Collect for the second Sunday in Lent, “ he keeps his humble and faithful servants “ from all adversities which might happen “ to the body ; and from all evil thoughts “ which might assault and hurt the soul.” From his pure bounty, and from his just and equitable judgment, is to flow all that we have to hope, and all that we have to fear : For in a sedate, comparative view, with God’s favour, temporal and eternal, all the little objects for which mankind harbour such anxiety, and raise so much tumult, dwindle, till they absolutely sink to nothing.

And yet, if we have any business of consequence to transact, or any tribute of personal respect to pay to one who is greatly our earthly superiour, with what solicitude do we prepare for the momentous interview ! How careful are we, that every attitude of our body, and that every expression of our tongue, should be perfectly agreeable to him ; should please and flatter his self-love ! A proper regard to the different ranks which are established in every civilized government, is very laudable ; for it tends to promote the peace and order of society ; and it is enjoined us by the precepts of Christ, and recommended to us by his example. But in such an interview as I have been citing, I am afraid we are seldom influenced by sound policy, or by sound religion. On the contrary, I fear our behaviour is generally dictated by sordid motives. We are industrious to be approved by a poor mortal like ourselves, who is raised to a little transitory importance, from that unmanly and servile fear

fear which often models our whole deportment, in our intercourse with the Great; or by an artful and designing manner, which we have adopted, to secure some paltry and contemptible object of secular interest. Perhaps, too, we are, by nature and acquirements, superiour to this man to whom we are so submissive; and who may be only our superiour in station. We may possess more external accomplishments than he; and what is more material, we may possess better talents, and more liberal and useful knowledge; but, what is of most consequence, we may be his superiours in virtue; in the christian ornaments of the mind.— Shall we, then, be so zealous to please a weak, frail, and perishable being, whose highest favours are shorter-lived than himself; and shall we show indifference, shall we show contempt, to that Being, to whom alone universal perfection can, with truth, be ascribed;—whose rejection is exclusion

from Heaven ; whose approbation confers perpetual felicity ?

From what I have said, it naturally and indisputably follows, that while we are adoring the Deity in his sanctuary, we ought to keep a uniform and unaffected gravity ; we ought to aim at the perfection of religious decorum. I think I may venture to assert, that while we are engaged in the duty of the church, even a smile is not only improper and idle, but profane. God forbid that I should ever represent religion to you as an unsocial and austere institution :—“ Let all them that put their “ trust in Thee, rejoice,” says David. Ps. v. v. 12.—And again he says, “ let the righteous be glad ; let them rejoice before “ God ; yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.” Ps. lxxviii. v. 3.—No man hath so good a title to a pleasurable existence, as the virtuous and religious man ; for his conscience is easy and comfortable to him ; his health is commonly good ; his spirits are serene and vigorous. And we may enjoy
many

many pleasures; we may indulge ourselves in various mirth, within the limits of reason and religion. Indeed, merely as prudent men; merely as men of *this* world, we should take no pleasures; we should participate no festivity which are out of those bounds:—For such pleasures, and such festivity, are unavoidably followed by pain, in sensation and in reflexion. But there are times for all things, says the vulgar Proverb:—“And to every thing,” says a higher authority, that of Solomon. Eccles. ch. iii. v. 1.—“To every thing there is a season; and a time to every purpose under the Heaven.”—Among other objects of proper times, he says, “there is a time to laugh:”—And I think it would be as ill-bred, unfocial, and four, I had almost said, as unchristian, not to laugh when all our companions were innocently and sensibly merry around us (however this doctrine may violate the despicable rules for good manners of a late polite and flimsy Lord) as it would be improper, absurd, and impi-

ous in us to laugh while we were offering our petitions to the Throne of Heaven.

By indecent behaviour at church, you openly and publicly declare your contempt of the place; of the Christian Religion; and I tremble while I add, that you declare your contempt of God. All these horrible declarations you make; for our actions, our conduct, are more expressive, are more declarative of our genuine thoughts, than language.

The wise man, in the passage from which I have taken my text, bids us keep our feet, that is, properly dispose our minds when we go to the House of God, "lest we should offer the sacrifice of fools." In the Scriptures, and particularly in the Old Testament, by the words, fools, and folly, are generally meant the wicked, and impiety; and by the terms, the wise, and wisdom, are commonly signified, good men, and true practical religion. And these words very properly, and pertinently, and forcibly convey these ideas. For what can be more

consummate

consummate wisdom, than that conduct which will secure to us peace and satisfaction of mind ; our *real* interest even here below ; the esteem of the good ; and the love of our Creator ?—And what can be grosser folly, than that terrible *mis*-conduct by which we forfeit the approbation of our own minds ; our substantial *sublunary* welfare, well considered, and well known ; the esteem of respectable characters ; and the favour of God ? And how completely profligate must that wretch be ; how certainly must he have forfeited all these invaluable objects, who continually shows an open contempt of the public worship of his Maker ; who cannot keep a spiritual watch over himself for *one* hour ?

In the same passage in which the text is contained, another reason is given, why we should be careful of our behaviour in the Temple of God ;—“ for God (says Solomon) is in Heaven, and we are upon “ Earth.” God, it is true, exists in all places ; his presence and his influence are infinite,
both

in space and in duration ;—but there *is* a place, there is a mansion, where the spirits of just men, made perfect, reside ;—and with that place, which is distinguishedly called Heaven, he is particularly well pleased. There, to the souls of the Virtuous, and to the company of Angels, he gives peculiar indications of his presence ; of his glory ; of his approbation ; and of his benevolence. And from the strong emanations of Divinity, by which he shows his paternal love to this pure and beatified society, we may infer, what a purity of devotion, what a constant and equal flame of piety, he requires from his worshippers here on earth. We ought, undoubtedly, to worship him in spirit and in truth.

This worship is recommended and enforced by many passages in the sacred writings. I shall cite some of them, to confirm what I have been endeavouring to inculcate. “ Oh ! how amiable (says the “ Psalmist) are thy dwellings, thou Lord “ of Hosts ! My soul hath a desire and
“ longing

“longing to enter into the courts of the
 “Lord : My heart, and my flesh, rejoice in
 “the living God !” Pf. lxxxiv. v. 1, 2.—We
 may be sure, that he who expressed himself
 with such a beautiful enthusiasm on the
 Temple of his God, was very humble, and
 attentive, and fervent there ;—and deemed
 the person whose behaviour on that sacred
 ground was negligent and ludicrous, lost
 to all due sense of religion ; to every vir-
 tuous impression.

“Let us lift up our heart with our hands,
 “unto God in the Heavens,” says the Pro-
 phet Jeremiah. Lam. ch. iii. v. 41.—Im-
 plying, that our decent external behaviour
 at church is of no avail, unless our souls
 be disengaged from all the low pursuits of
 earth, and directed to Heaven.

There is not a more remarkable passage
 in the New Testament, than that in
 which the Evangelist relates how our Sa-
 viour treated the money-changers in the
 Temple, and those who sold doves. Mark,
 ch. xi. v. 15, 16, 17. He made an in-
 strument

strument of punishment, with which he drove them out of the Temple. The little narrative is very singular and striking, on two accounts. The place from which these low retailers were driven, was not literally and strictly, the Temple, the body of the Temple; but its outer-court, set apart for the worship of those Gentiles who had embraced the Jewish Religion. And it is probable, by the natural effect of custom, from time perhaps immemorial, that the people who followed their low traffick in that court, did not immediately recollect, that by so doing, they were guilty of an offence against God. And it is extremely remarkable, that this is almost the only passage in the New Testament, in which we find the Son of God, the example of all meekness and toleration, warmed to a generous and pious indignation. If he then felt this resentment, for the honour of the outer-court of the sanctuary of his Father, against criminals, who were guilty, in the lowest degree, of profanation,

fanation, what must he have thought of the impiety of all irreverence to sacred ground, and of the bad effects which it produces ! And if he was now on earth, what punishment would he inflict on those men who behave in a dissipated, in a comic manner, in the midst of their devotions, as they are pleased to style the wanderings and the levities of their minds ; in the heart of a Christian church, and before the altar of their Saviour ; precincts which deserve more honour and reverence (I will not say, than the outer-court) than the Sanctum Sanctorum of the Temple of the Jews ?

In keeping our foot, or, in a proper collection of mind and attention, when we go to the House of God, is included, an examination of our past life, and a determination to live well for the future. Without this retrospect and resolution, by our constant and decent attendance on the ordinances of religion, we shall only augment our practical guilt ; we shall only be confirmed hypocrites

hypocrites with men ; and we shall commit repeated and daring insults against the Majesty of Heaven. We should not frequent the church, unless we lead a good life ; and unless we are diligent to improve in every christian virtue. For the publick service of the church was instituted by the Deity, *only* that it might strengthen and refine our practical, active virtue, and piety ; only that it might secure to us the temporal and eternal favour of God, by making us more worthy to receive his favour. Though we are commanded in Scripture, to glorify God in our body, and in our spirit, which are God's, we must not imagine that by any worship, publick or private, that *we* pay to the Supreme Being, we can really add to his personal greatness, and honour, and glory. The expressions of honouring, and glorifying God, are used, in the Sacred Writings, from the poverty of all language ; from a necessary condescension to our ideas ; from the reciprocal relation and communication

nication between a superiour and one who
 is greatly his inferiour. The result, and
 the main object, in the Holy Scriptures,
 of that conduct, by which it is here said,
 that we honour and glorify God, is our
 own happiness:----Of that conduct, by
 which we live agreeably to right reason;
 to the harmonious connexion between us
 and the natural and moral world; and to
 the precepts of revelation; of that con-
 duct, by which, as we feel it's happy con-
 sequences, we naturally, both in publick
 and private, express our gratitude to the
 Divine Being, whose natural, and moral,
 and revealed laws, are so favourable and
 generous to the practice of virtue and
 piety. By this conduct, and by this gra-
 titude alone, and only as far as they pro-
 mote the respectability and happiness of
 ourselves and others, can it, with any
 propriety, be said, that we honour and
 glorify God.

The royal Prophet, in the 50th Psalm,
 after a noble description of the majesty
 and

and goodness of God, expostulates with his countrymen, on their gross mistakes in matters of religion; on their large and expensive sacrifices; and their omission of the weightier articles of the law; simplicity, and ardour of heart, and purity and rectitude of manners. “I will not re-
 “prove thee (says the Deity to the House
 “of Israel, in the inspired page of David) I
 “will not reprove thee, because of thy sa-
 “crifices, or for thy burnt-offerings; be-
 “cause they were not always before me:
 “I will take no bullock out of thine
 “house, nor he-goat out of thy folds;
 “for all the beasts of the forest are mine;
 “and so are the cattle upon a thousand
 “hills.—Thinkest thou that I will eat
 “bull’s flesh, or drink the blood of goats?”
 Psal. 1. verses 8, 9, 10, and 13. “The
 whole Creation is mine; therefore no
 part of it canst thou give me. Besides,
 thou canst not add to my grandeur
 by thy costly victims; by any homage
 thou canst pay me: I have ordered
 thee

thee to worship me for thy own sake ;
 that thou mayest be virtuous, and pious,
 and happy." After several moral re-
 proofs, the Psalm thus concludes :—

*Whoso offereth me thanks and praise, he ha-
 noureth me; and to him that ordereth his
 conversation right, will I show the salva-
 tion of God.* "When I command men to

"honour me, I mean, that they should of-
 fer me thanks and praise, for the benefits
 which they receive from me, in simplicity
 and sincerity of heart and mind, that they
 may be prepared, and worthy to receive
 more benefits ; that they may be more
 steady and vigorous, in the discharge of
 the duties of life : For not to any mere
 formal and solemn homage ; not to
 whole hecatombs, will I grant the satisf-
 action of this world, and the happiness
 of the next ; but to *Him*, and to *Him*
 only, who ordereth his conversation
 right, will I show the salvation of God."

Let us, then, my brethren, seriously
 and strenuously endeavour to order our

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conver-

conversation right, in this deceitful and transitory state; and if we prosecute and accomplish that endeavour, we shall always order our devotions, *here*, with propriety, and with subsequent and certain effect.

SER-

S E R M O N VIII.

ON THE GOOD EFFECTS OF A STRENUOUS
APPLICATION OF THE MIND.

PROV. CHAP. XII, LATTER PART OF VERSE 27.

THE SUBSTANCE OF A DILIGENT MAN IS
PRECIOUS.

THE human mind is an active principle ; a penetrating and comprehensive being ; and if it is not innocently or laudably employed, it will find for itself some trifling or bad employment : Therefore, as man is by nature active and discurfivè, and as it is highly probable, that if he is not engaged in good, he will be intent on bad perfuits, it is *already* evident, that we fhould be extremely careful, in the courfe of our lives, to be well employed ;

ployed ; to be employed on objects that deserve the attention and exertion of rational, religious, and immortal agents. There is, indeed, amongst the sons of men, a vegetable kind of a class of mortals, who seem to doze, and to sleep, from the cradle to the grave ; beings too stationary and too motionless, to admit any character ; * beings who are almost perfectly innoxious ; who do neither good nor harm ; because they are neither warmed with benevolence, nor irritated by passion ; but yet, who are positively praised by selfish and unreflecting judges : By *them* they are stiled *mighty good sort of people* ; because they never oppose and wound *their* self-love, *their* pride, *their* importance, in their own eyes.

These mortifying specimens of the human race, I shall, however, leave to their torpid

* Voltaire somewhere tells us, that Anne of Austria, mother of Louis XIV. was, at times, one of these human vegetables ; that she used to be alone for many hours, *sans plaisir, et sans peine*.

torpid state, from which almost nothing less than a miracle could rouse them. I shall proceed to a view of those objects which deserve the consideration of an active, an industrious, and a virtuous mind.

I shall take the liberty to recommend to you, a proper attention, a strenuous diligence, in our respective callings; nay, I shall recommend *some* good employment to every one, from three principal motives; because rational and laudable employment prevents the immediate bad effects of idleness and indolence; because industry is necessary to most of us, to procure a decent and comfortable subsistence; and because it is strongly inculcated on our minds, in the Sacred Writings; and most remarkably and illustriously exemplified there, by the brightest models of human and divine excellence.

One immediate, obvious, and undeniable good effect of honest application is, that while it thoroughly occupies us, it excludes evil from the mind. Many of

our grievous errors ; many of our vices ; much of our misery, often our ruin, result from the wanderings and luxuriance of the imagination ; which are very apt to prevail, if the mind is not attached to some serious employment ; especially if we are of a lively and animated frame.— But it is impossible for the mathematician, while he accompanies the soul of Newton through infinite space, calculates the planetary laws, and almost *sees* the Deity ; it is impossible for *his* thoughts to grovel in selfishness and sensuality. It is impossible for the poet, while his numbers are dignified with the cause of liberty and virtue ; while, in a venal, servile, and profligate age, he calls up for our admiration, the manes of a Ruffel or a Sidney ; it is impossible for *him*, while he is thus nobly employed, to harbour an idea which is unworthy of the heroes whom he celebrates. But I will descend to the lower kinds of application ; to humble, and merely useful industry ; which I should be
sorry,

sorry, if I was such a dupe to literary vanity, as not to respect and to praise. There is hardly any calling that is substantially useful to mankind, which is well prosecuted, if it is not prosecuted with the undivided attention. One art demands more exertion of mind, more intense application than another; but in no art shall we acquit ourselves well, if, while we are pursuing *it*, we suffer foreign objects to interfere with the objects of that art. Hence, the lowest mechanick, while he is properly occupied in his trade, by a necessary consequence, shuts out from his mind, for the time, all temptation to evil. Industry, then, is one of the virtues of the man of *good* principles; and it facilitates to him the practice of all his other virtues; it helps him, it disposes and prepares his mind to improve them: Nay, so strong is the power of industry, when it is habitually and vigorously pursued, it rivets the human mind to the present good employment, with so adamantine a

chain, that it may keep the man of bad principles, the infidel, even the Atheist himself, practically innocent. So forcible is the operation of this universal moral charm, that it keeps in order a wild beast, in human form, which, in all probability, would spread destruction around it, to it's utmost power, if it was let loose on society.

As we were intended, by the Authour of our being, for laudable action, we avoid, by virtuous activity, the most disagreeable sensations, the most horrible depressions of mind. Idleness and indolence are succeeded by a listless and wearisome state; which, though not actually and literally painful, is more hostile to our easy existence, is more intolerable than some degrees of pain. To get rid of this load on the very soul; and, in consequence, of those riots of fancy, which are the progeny of idleness; to make, or create for themselves, scenes of action; on what freaks, and extravagances, and vices do *they* rush (the rich,

rich, the noble, and the great) who are born with the privilege, or rather with the curse, of bestowing, or more properly, of *devoting*, their time as they please! Gaming is the greatest and most destructive of those vices; it is now openly practised in all fashionable assemblies; and though, in the progress of polite iniquity, it becomes an infamous trade, it is undoubtedly often begun as a resource from idleness, from indolence, from lassitude of mind. What is the life of the gamester; and what are its effects? His mind is in a perpetual state of anxiety and agitation: He is distracted with tremulous hope, and excruciating fear. He is destitute of all principle; of all remorse; merciless to himself, he risks all his own interest on a throw;—and by such a throw, he reduces, in a moment, from affluence to poverty, his companion; him whom he falsely calls his friend;—without a sentiment of pity, it would be *superfluous* and *absurd* to say;—with a fictitious composure

fure of countenance ; but with the secret
 exultation of a heart habituated to ob-
 duracy and rapacity. If he has a run of
 good fortune, as he hath acquired no moral
 principle, nor any habit of laudable ap-
 plication, he is commonly a victim to a
 profligate and voluptuous life. From his
 mode of acquiring wealth, and from the
 general licentiousness of his manners, his
 society is avoided by all respectable cha-
 racters. He contracts painful and humili-
 ating diseases, from which practical
 morality and religion would have kept
 him for ever free. He dies prematurely ;
 racked with pain, and severely condemned
 by too late reflection : Body and mind
 conspire to agonize the death of the cri-
 minal. If he is completely unfortunate
 at play, ruin is followed by despair. He
 arrives at the extreme degree of folly, of
 madness, of impiety, by self-murder. To
 escape from a set of beings, as vile and
 contemptible as himself, he rushes into
 the presence of an offended and omni-
 potent

tent God ! But we often find, that the *successful* gamester abruptly terminates his sublunary existence, from self-abhorrence; so strong and unconquerable an antipathy is implanted in our nature, against extreme vice; even though that vice has taken it's birth, and been fostered in our own bosoms.

Such are the violent pleasures and pains; such are the mental hurricanes, which originate from a total inactivity of the man; from a fatal stillness of the soul. Thus, in a larger world than the microcosm of man, and in the warm latitudes of that larger world, a dead calm, a profound quiet; an apparently propitious peace of nature, often precedes her terrible tumults, her exemplary and memorable visitations;—the tremendous eruptions of her volcanos, and her desolating earthquakes.

I have laid a particular stress on the bad consequences of idleness, in fashionable and gay life; because those consequences
are,

are, *there*, most conspicuous and striking. But in the lower ranks of society, too, idleness has it's pernicious, it's ruinous effects. The idle peasant, or the idle mechanic, stimulates his vapid mind with some active trifle, or with some vice, attainable in his station. He is, perhaps, a busy, a troublesome inquirer into the conduct and circumstances of his neighbour; while he is equally neglectful of his own interest and his own morals. *He*, too, impetuously actuates his mind with his low drinking and his low gaming. His family feel the dreadful effect of his dissipation and his vices. While he is aggravating and multiplying evils to himself, *they* are shivering with nakedness and cold; they are pining with hunger. His indigence and his follies make him the bye-word of his town or village. *He lives not half his days*. He dies a miserable outcast of the decent, the sober, and the industrious.

Perhaps he feels himself necessitated by his wants, to attack the persons and the
properties

properties of his fellow-citizens; and thus he falls, not a victim to his intemperance, but to the hand of justice; a fate which, unfortunately for the good of society, is eluded by the gamester in high life. *He* publicly triumphs in his illegal spoils;—in the glare of grandeur, and in the face of day. I should be loth to extenuate the real demerit of *any* guilt which is evidently condemned by right reason, and by the laws of God and man; but I may venture to assert, that the gamester, who escapes the cognizance of *human* tribunals, is a greater criminal than the highwayman or the footpad, who are punished with death; a far greater criminal than the indigent rustick, whose extreme necessities drive him to petty theft. For the injuries which are brought on the community by the first culprit, are more prejudicial and extensive, than the wrongs and violence of the latter felons; and they are oftener perpetrated than theirs; they are suffered to be of a longer series, by the shameful, and improvident

vident lenity of this country. Laws, indeed, we have, against gaming; but they are not sufficiently severe; and too lenient as they are, they are not executed on the offenders. For, alas! many of the makers and dispensers of our laws, are guilty of the crime which I am censuring:— And though a Spartan senator might have enforced a statute, or proposed a more severe one, by which he might have been first reproached himself, and afterwards punished, in the meridian of the political and civil glory of Lacedæmon; yet ignorant and foolish would be the man, who should expect to see such a phenomenon in the last degree of English degeneracy and corruption.

My next capital argument, why we ought to habituate ourselves to industry, to some virtuous employment, is the necessity under which most of us are born to follow some calling or profession, to give society our labour or ingenuity for its reciprocal benefits; if we mean to procure a
decent

decent and comfortable subsistence for ourselves, and for those whom it is our immediate and indispensable duty to protect and to support. This necessity we are apt, very inconsiderately, and with a degree of impiety, to regret.

Attention and diligence, expended on worthy objects, not only produce remoter good consequences, but are immediately attended with agreeable effects, which are very sensibly felt. Idleness hath it's concomitant and inseparable pains: Industry it's concomitant and inseparable pleasures. As we were formed to be active and useful to one another; when we have acquired the invaluable habit of application and industry, in the very time while we are employed in study, in business, in any creditable profession or calling, we feel a sweet and inexplicable pleasure, instantaneously, instinctively; independently of all virtuous reflexion; of all self-approbation; from the proper play which we give to our well-regulated nature. And as a
reasonable

reasonable variety is requisite to keep the current of existence clear and vigorous, the contrast of labour with it's opposites, gives the highest lustre and zest to the relaxations and enjoyments of the industrious man.

Then, as his time is consecrated to acting well, he is moderate in his pleasures; his health is good; his wants are few; and his mind enjoys those inestimable blessings, peace and serenity. When at the end of a week, or a month, or a year, he sits down to recollect that he has, during the time through which he looks back, worshipped God regularly in publick and in private, and exerted his honest diligence for the good of his family, and of mankind;—how heart-felt, how pure, how strong must his satisfaction be! It is solid, permanent, indeprivable; how infinitely superiour to the transient and flashy joys of the idle and the gay; of the grown children, who are continually agitated with the tinsel and the frippery of life! Were I to proceed no farther, I have certainly proved
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the truth of my text ; I have certainly shown to demonstration, that the substance of a diligent man is precious. Twenty pounds expended by such a man, are of more value ; for they do him more service ; they give him more real pleasure, than twenty thousand pounds afford, when that sum is lavished away by an extravagant and dissipated person in high life. Let us not be deceived by appearances ; let us not be misled by meteors. Could we pervade the breasts of the rich and the great, with the Lynx's view of acute, direct, unprejudiced reason, we should severely condemn our folly, for ever having envied them their situation. As we are Christians, we should give them our sincerest pity ; and if we were not Christians, they would incur our contempt. But we are fascinated with the surface of things ; with the bright and delusive colours of the objects that surround us. To these delusive colours, the Syren, Fancy, adds her fantastic and pleasing images.

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This light, yet powerful conspiracy, not only mocks the gaze of ignorance and simplicity, but too often foils the penetration even of learning and philosophy. In our common survey of the elegancies, the splendour, and the happiness of the great, we are reading a rich oriental tale; in which not a word is addressed to the intellect, but all is calculated to fire and to charm the imagination. But whenever we correct the Arabian glare with the sober light of reason, the talisman is immediately broken; the stupendous fabric is dissolved; the enchanted castle, and it's Elysian gardens, vanish; and in the space which *they* occupied, is extended to our view, a bleak and a dreary waste.

If the mind's eye would boldly and steddily pierce through the dazzling lustre, with which the wealthy and the great are environed, we should view them with compassion instead of admiration; we should see their bodies torne with disease, and their unperishable substance a prey to
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many restless and baleful passions, which are tormenting to themselves and others. But in estimating their consequence and their happiness, our precipitate judgement rests on externals. When we see their noble houses, their sumptuous tables, their splendid equipages, their numerous domestics ; and when we observe that men in liberal stations pay them polite homage, and eloquent respect, we are apt to repine at our plain and humble accommodations ; we are apt to think that the world was made for *them* ; nay, we are apt, at least by implication, to accuse the Judge of all the earth, who must ultimately do right, of partiality and injustice. But, pray, what are often the certain and visible effects of all this grandeur ? All that flexible and obsequious attention which is paid to it's possessours, is selfishness, vanity, and hypocrisy, thrown into action. And their more substantial elegancies are yet their more fatal enemies than their flatterers or their slaves. By using their carriages al-

most on every occasion, they lose the use of their legs ; and by an intemperate use of the luxuries of the table, they render life painful, with many factitious maladies ; and they accelerate and aggravate the pains of death. In short, many a Dives, who is cloathed in purple, and fine linen, and fares sumptuously every day, is, in fact, as miserable and lamentable an object, as a Lazarus, who may be laid at his gate, half dead with famine, and with all the external horrors of his history.

I had almost forgotten to observe, in honour of the lower, and useful industry, and to inspire content and satisfaction into the minds of its professors, that they have no substantial reason to envy those who are employed in the sublimer occupations. It is the duty of a Minister of the Gospel to be completely impartial in his observations ; to be as zealous to combat and to humble the pride of intellect, as the pride of life. Though the illustrious men who have excelled in science, or in imagination,

tion, have enlarged the knowledge of the human mind, and of the works of nature, and consequently have promoted the cause of virtue, and the honour of our Creator; yet it must be owned—however reluctantly, it *must* be owned, that the daily labour of the meaner artisan is of more *real* service to the community, than *their* generous and noble sentiments; their striking pictures; their animated and irresistible style, and their astonishing discoveries. And if the lowest mechanic did but know those pains which are the concomitants of exalted genius; which are entailed on it by nature, and which are inseparable from it's exertion, he would receive new conviction of the truth of Solomon's observation, that *in much wisdom is much grief, and that he who increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow*; Eccl. ch. i, v. 18; he would be cured of his envy, if he had entertained any envy, of superiour abilities, conversant with superiour objects. To view the man of lite-

rature, of knowledge, and of great talents, only in cultivating his profession ; *—he is anxious and perplexed, while he in vain endeavours to solve some difficulty in science, or in the fine arts ; or his mind is painfully exerted, to give all possible force to his thoughts ; to give the perfection of elegance and beauty to his sentiments and language. Then he is inflamed with ambition ; which was wisely inspired into his soul by Heaven, that the great ends of his existence might be accomplished ; for without the incitement of ambition, who would endure to traverse the most honourable, but rugged and arduous path, of intellectual glory ? But the breast that is fired with ambition, is a stranger to ease. He is anxious and eager, to equal or to surpass cotemporary, or departed excellence.

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* It may be here objected, that this passage contradicts my general theory, that all virtuous employment affords great satisfaction. I reply, that to the scholar, and the man of genius, painful severities of thought only sometimes occur ; and that our best pleasures are not without their alloy.

Our Themistocles cannot rest while he reflects on the laurels of past days; on some memorable champion of the Muses; on the trophies of some literary Miltiades.

Surely, then, if it was right to harbour envy, envy should take a new direction. It should rise in the breast of the elevated genius; he should pine while he contemplates the happy destiny of the humble mechanick. The former should envy the latter the easy and certain progress of his simpler ingenuity; he should envy him his equal spirits, and his uninterrupted sleep.

Though, I fear, I have too long detained you, yet I must beg leave to offer you, and to enforce as strongly as I can, my last principal argument for an industrious life; the authority of Scripture, which, in many places, explicitly and earnestly enjoins industry; and the great and divine examples in Scripture, by which industry is yet more decisively recommended to our practice, and *sanctified*.

Industry is so important to our interest and happiness, that I have often thought, that a most energetick lecture, inculcating diligence to the human race, is given in the very first page of Revelation. God Almighty could have created the world in a moment, as easily as he created it in six days. But by creating it in six days, he seems to have given a strong, an awful admonition to mankind, through all ages, to be satisfied with obtaining excellent ends, by deliberate and progressive means. *And God rested (says Moses) on the seventh day, from all his work which he had made.* Exod. ch. ii, v. 2. *And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it;* v. iii. Here we have a momentous lesson, contained in the example of the Supreme Being. He teaches us to be well employed during six days, and to dedicate the seventh to *his* worship, as the best preparative for our good conduct, success, and well-being, through every week of our lives.

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We find in St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, that *he laboured, working with his own hands*, ch. iv, v. 12. And he says, in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, *in all things I have kept myself from being burthensome to you; and so will I keep myself*; ch. xi, v. 9. St. Paul's trade was that of a tent-maker, as we are informed in the eighteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles; where we are likewise informed, that he wrought at his business with his countryman Aquila, who was a profelyte to Christianity. Thus, while he preached the gospel to the primitive churches, he supported himself by his industry. It is impracticable, indeed, for our modern Ministers, completely to imitate this great Apostle of the Gentiles; to preach the gospel without a stipend; and, at the same time, to follow some secular calling for their livelihood. The times of the Apostles were simple, and patriarchal, comparatively with the present; the Christian Religion was then.

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forcibly and irresistably diffused, by the extraordinary and invisible assistance of the Deity : consequently, it's Ministers did not need the influence of personal and external dignity. They were enabled thoroughly to understand and explain Religion, by immediate and effectual inspiration. The accounts of the preservation of the Scriptures, from age to age ; the various history of the Christian Church, diversified with controversies and revolutions ; and the vain, yet artful presumption of philosophy, require of an ecclesiastick, in *our* days, a patient, gradual, and large acquisition of sacred and human learning ; if he is desirous to discharge his important trust with credit and advantage to himself and the publick. Hence, it is evident, that time will not now permit a Christian Minister, to join his *secular* to his *spiritual* calling. Yet, the account which I have given you of the disinterestedness ; of the indefatigable zeal and industry of St. Paul, is certainly a warning, an admonition, I
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am afraid a severe reprehension, to many of our modern clergy; especially to our dignitaries and heads of the church; who ought to be the great examples, the luminaries, the burning and shining lights, to all others of their profession. If they need not condescend to be as humble as St. Paul, that great and learned Apostle of the Gentiles, who was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; who was equally conversant with the Scriptures, and with all the popular literature of his age; if they need not condescend to be as humble as this illustrious ornament of the Apostolick Church, who, by our blessed Saviour himself, even from the heavenly regions, was nominated to be his Minister; if they need not condescend to be tent-makers; they ought, surely, to give most of their time to the indispensable duties of their function; to the study of the Holy Scriptures, and of all literature by which these Scriptures are authenticated and confirmed; and to the diffusion of practical

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Christianity, by their doctrine and by their lives.

Most of the Apostles, you know, were totally illiterate. Such men, God, in his perfect wisdom, selected, for his ambassadours to mankind; that they might be satisfied, that the truths which those ambassadours preached, truths at once so simple and so sublime, could only flow from divine inspiration; and that they might be indisputably convinced, that the new religion was not a religion of artful politicians and impostors. As most of the Apostles were totally illiterate, they were bred to low employments; to the humblest industry: indeed, most of them were fishermen.

My first awful recommender of industry to mankind, was the Supreme Being; my last shall be the Messiah. In St. Matthew's gospel we are told, that when in his own country, he taught the Jews in their synagogue, they were astonished at his doctrine; and said—*Whence hath this man this wisdom,*

dom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Mat. ch. xiii, verses 54, 55. Here you see, that Joseph, that just man, who had the honour to be the nominal Father of Christ, was a carpenter. But St. Mark's account of this part of our Saviour's history is more distinct, more particular, more emphatical. His words are,—*Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?*—Mark, ch. vi, v. 3.—From this passage we may be certain, that Christ himself, that the Son of God, and God the Son; that he who could always have commanded in a moment all the necessaries and conveniences of life; all the elegancies and splendour of the world; that he who could have commanded the universe; to set his true followers an example of patience, humility, and industry, wrought at the business of a carpenter. Good God! Can human arrogance, *now*, be so intoxicating; can it be so impudent, as to think *any* honest employment beneath it? Any honest employment

ployment is so far from being despicable, that it absolutely acquires dignity from this memorable, this divine example. By this prescription of our celestial Master, every virtuous mechanick is made a respectable, a venerable member of society, while living; and he is almost canonized when dead!----And will any licentious Peer of any Realm, with all his pageantry of place and title, presume to look down with contempt on those, who, by the inequality of our appointments here below, are his inferiours in station? Will he presume to look down with contempt on an honest farmer, an honest gardiner, or an honest carpenter? If he *does*, his absurdity is as flagrant as his impiety. For *they* are assiduous to discharge their duty to *God*; to themselves; to their families, and to their country;---to promote publick order and harmony; and to multiply publick blessings. While *he* labours, with equal might, to ruin himself, and those with whom he is intimately connected;

ned, and to throw disorder and confusion into society.

Since, then, we have seen such dreadful consequences of idleness, and such excellent effects of virtuous application, let us all, of either sex, in our respective stations and callings, be vigorously employed in that which is good. Instead of repining that we are obliged to be industrious,*
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* In the Greek language there is an adjective (*Σπουδαίος*) which both signifies the *industrious* and the *virtuous* man. Indeed, the virtuous man is always an industrious man; and the industrious man is commonly a virtuous person. There is a strong reason, why in the Greek language (in that most elegant and pertinent language) the epithet *Σπουδαίος*, is applied to the virtuous man:—because, to obtain a proficiency in virtue, the first of human acquisitions, demands perhaps more industry, and watchfulness over ourselves, than to excel in any other important object of human pursuit. Yet so poorly do we estimate either the inestimable worth of virtue, or the glorious difficulty of acquiring it, that we are apt to fancy we should acquire it by a wish, or a prayer. Consequently, on the first specious allurements to vice;—on the first trying conflict

let us thank Heaven for the manly and honourable privilege. A privilege which precludes pain, and confers pleasures ; immediate and subsequent, temporal and eternal. A privilege most extensive and comprehensive ; by a proper use of which, we at once essentially serve ourselves, mankind, and *God*.

conflict with our passions, we are apt to relinquish our efforts to secure a possession, in comparison with which, all science, and learning, and wealth, are insignificant, and despicable.

S E R M O N IX.

ON RESIGNATION TO THE DIVINE WILL.

LUKE, CHAP. XXII. PART OF VERSE 42.

—NOT MY WILL ; BUT THINE BE DONE.

THE words which I have chosen for my text, are a part of a short and memorable prayer, addressed by our Saviour to his Father, on a most memorable and melancholy occasion. He offered up this petition, in the Garden of Gethsemane, on the night immediately preceding the tragical day of his crucifixion. The agony of his mind, at that crisis, it is impossible to describe ; for it can be but very imperfectly imagined. He had a strong presentiment of the horrible death which was awaiting him ;—he was

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almost deserted by his friends, in the extremity of distress; when the sympathy and consolation of friends are dearest, and most desirable: and it is supposed, by the best Commentators, that, to complete his anguish, the particular influence and power of God were, for a while, withdrawn from him, at this gloomy catastrophe; that by his intense sufferings, the Divine displeasure against sin might be fully demonstrated to mankind; and that by those sufferings, a satisfactory atonement might be made for the faults of every *practical* penitent; of every *true* Christian.

The former as well as the latter part of the short supplication to which I refer, give us very striking objects for our virtuous improvement; a most affecting example of resignation to the Divine will. *Father*, says our Saviour, *if thou be willing, remove this cup from me*.—How exquisite must have been the pain of our Redeemer's mind, when he wished, even for a *moment*, to wave those sufferings, to endure

endure which, he knew that he had been sent into the world;—those sufferings, with which, at other times, he was anxious to expiate the sins of mankind!—And how implicit, how habitual must have been his acquiescence in the pleasure of God, when he could immediately correct the wish which agony had extorted from him!—*nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done!*

I shall now endeavour to lay before you the various motives by which we ought to be determined, to bear adverse events, with a patient, serene, and steady mind. I shall endeavour to evince to you, that it is incumbent on us to bear these events with this temper; whether we consider ourselves as men of the world; as prudent men; as good politicians; or as moral agents; as beings accountable to the Deity for our conduct; as beings endowed with a knowledge of natural religion. But I shall rivet my doctrine, as it is my duty, as well as my desire, to

strengthen and confirm all the important objects which I may ever offer to sensible and good minds, by the authority of revelation, in which we find a cheerful and entire resignation to the will of Heaven, enforced, with equal energy, by precept and by example.

And he, who, before he puts any duty to the test of revelation, shows it's great propriety and use, by it's being consonant with the laws of prudence and of natural religion, corroborates, instead of weakening the influence of the Scriptures; whatever may be the declamations to the contrary, of vulgar and visionary enthusiasts. Be assured, no part of true speculative, or practical divinity, can be at variance with our natural and just sentiments of God, and of mankind. That infinitely wise and benevolent Being, who gave us a revelation from Heaven, first gave us reason from Heaven. Between reason, therefore, and revelation, there must be a perpetual amity; an
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eternal treaty of mutual alliance and support. Instead of contradicting and confounding, they confirm, illuminate, and beautify each other: he, therefore, who urges, and displays this reciprocal strength and harmony, is the judicious minister of the gospel; not *he*, who absurdly and rashly attempts to break this sacred and salutary union; who is impiously industrious to make the Deity inconsistent with himself.

I shall now endeavour to prove, that to bear the worst misfortunes that can befall us, with patience and composure of mind, is the best rule, that, in those circumstances, can be dictated to us by prudence.

You will readily allow, that our most judicious conduct is requisite, when we meet with the most unfortunate events. Now, if we even admit, for a moment, that, when our interest is wounded by any great disaster, we could act as effectually for our future welfare, under the influ-

ence of fretfulness and passion, as if we bore that disaster with firmness and magnanimity; yet, with *this* too indulgent supposition, we shall be obliged to grant, that fretfulness and passion do no good; nay, that they aggravate the disaster; that they are a calamity with which we distress ourselves, by our own blundering impetuosity; a calamity superadded to that which was sent us by the unerring providence of God.

But you all know, that this is not a right representation of the case. Impatience under a heavy misfortune, is not merely adding one evil to another, but it likewise deprives us of the full exertion of our reason; it deprives us of the best means by which we might remedy the former evil. It probably impells us to some precipitate measure, which renders our situation far worse than it was before; or it is followed by a gloom and dejection, that chain us down to a fullen indolence, when we ought to put forth all our activity
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and vigour. Thus, misfortunes are accumulated by the temerity or stagnation of the man; so inseparable are destructive consequences from vice, that it's very quiet is pregnant with ruin.

Almost all they who have suffered a long series of the evils of life, either exclaim against their bad fortune, in the unintelligible and immoral jargon of the world; or, in more daring and profligate terms, seem to impeach the justice and goodness of the Deity. But if they would divest their minds of those narrow prejudices, of that extreme partiality to ourselves, with which we review our actions, they would find, in general, that most of the disagreeable circumstances, most of the painful events which embitter their existence, have originated from their own misconduct. It's merited rewards are commonly bestowed on virtue; and it's merited punishments are commonly inflicted on vice, even in *this* uncertain and unequal world. The tenour of the good

man's life is true enjoyment; the days of the bad man are overshadowed and blackened with discontent and pain, by the constitution of our nature, and by the general coincidence of external objects. If we are temperate, our temperance is most probably recompensed with good health and long life; if we are industrious, we generally procure, not only the necessaries, but a competence of the conveniences of life; and all beyond that competence, is a gilded and delusive vapour. And if we are actively and industriously benevolent; if we do all the good in our power to the community; we are esteemed and respected by society, (for simple, yet august virtue, in spite of fashion and show, *will* be venerated) and we enjoy the friendship and affection of some of the worthiest individuals. But if a man, who is idle and intemperate, and licentious, is reduced to indigence; and if he is insensible to the distresses of others; if he is malignant and revengeful; and consequently, if he is disliked;

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if he is detested by all who know him—
 if his many efforts for advancement in life
 prove abortive; let him not sit down and
 execrate fortune in the impotence of his
 spleen; but let him *tremble* to murmur at
 the dispensations of Providence; to launch
 into the tremendous absurdities of the
 Atheist, for that very wise and benign
 œconomy, which demonstrates a God.
 Let him give an impartial and severe re-
 trospect to his past imprudences and vices,
 and he will find that *they* were the sources
 of all his disappointments and miseries.
 After this retrospect, let him so repent as
 totally to change his manners. Let him
 spurn the ostentatious formality of re-
 pentance; the orisons of the monk; or
 the tears of the woman: let his repent-
 ance consist in resolute and virtuous ac-
 tion; let it be worthy of the man, and
 of the genuine Christian. As he discards
 his vices, he will get rid of their effects;
 and, from their opposite substitutes, he may
 expect to enjoy, gradually, in process of
 time,

time, their opposite consequences ; the consequences of those useful and amiable virtues which I have already enumerated, with their natural and immediate rewards ; with their usual and happy concomitants. By this noble resolution, and by this noble practice, he will bear his past calamities with serenity and firmness ; by his salutary reflections on these calamities, and on their causes, he will turn them to his pleasure and advantage ; they will strengthen his adherence to virtue. Thus, so tolerant, so indulgent, so beneficent is nature, that our very vices may be of moral service to us ; our very poison may become our antidote, by the powerful and celestial chymistry of a virtuous and determined mind.

I observed, that he who has long deviated from the path of virtue, can only hope to experience the good effects of his amendment of life, *gradually, and in process of time.* This is evident, from several undeniable, though melancholy reasons.

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That human acquisitions are difficult to be attained, in proportion as they are worthy of our attainment, is among the unfurmountable laws of nature. Yet, we are not deterred by difficulties from prosecuting many liberal attainments. The young mathematician's ambition; his ardent desire of knowledge, are not cooled by the abstracted and complex elements of his art. He perseveres in being disciplined by Euclid, at the foot of the mountain of Science; and he afterwards, patiently and strenuously, through many perplexed and rugged mazes, ascends to the top of that sacred mountain, to hold sublime and awful converse with Newton. The soul of the young poet, flushed with all the vernal luxuriance of fancy, and fired with the laurels of the memorable dead, encounters, combats, and conquers, all the difficulties of *his* divine art. He enriches his excursive and ardent mind from the writings of his greatest masters; he investigates the beauties, the horrors; the
various

various grandeur of nature ; he becomes acquainted (to use the words of a celebrated authour) with all that is awfully great, or elegantly little ; and at length he presents to the world, the moral or descriptive page, animated with all the warmth and exuberance of fancy ; and with all the harmony and magick of numbers. As we are talking of the benevolent and beneficent Great, let us expose to just contempt and ridicule, their contrasts, the selfish and mischievous Little, by mentioning *them* in an immediately subsequent period. To what indefatigable industry ; to what painful plodding does not the lawyer submit (I am going to speak of the illiberal and unprincipled part of the profession) to ruin his neighbour, that he may raise a fortune to himself !

* How watchful and anxious must be the
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* Malignity will cavil at this passage, and give it an invidious interpretation : but to *her* shafts I have been long inured. The liberal reader will approve the warmth and resentment of an English authour,
when

competition, how venal the prostitution of a young, phlegmatick, and knavish courtier ! What expedients and resources must he get by rote !—not adopted from the code of universal and generous legislation ; but from the miserable and empirical common-place-book of policy in detail ; before he reaches his shameful, if not painful pre-eminence ; before he is appointed minister of state ; before that dæmon of rapacity has it in his power to ruin a community !

Thus, to be illustrious, or to be infamous, we are tired out by no labour ; we are appalled by no difficulties :—but we give no persevering application to the conquest of our passions ; to our improvement in virtue. We subdue the asperities of

when I inform him, that the passage was written under the administration of Lord North, and during the American war. To expunge my allusion, at *this* time, would be particularly absurd ; it is an eulogy on Mr. Pitt, who deserves every encomium from his countrymen ; for his character is a complete contrast to this picture.

of the other sciences ; but by the least roughness in the master-science, we are deterred from attempting a proficiency ; that master-science, which is perspicuous and simple in it's doctrine, but arduous and noble in it's execution ; that science which ensures our true dignity and happiness ; which makes us contribute most to the welfare of mankind ; which carries us far beyond the loftiest flights of the poet, or the sublimest discoveries of the philosopher ; for even while we are upon earth, it exalts us to an association and friendship with God.

The man who determines to relinquish vice, and to practise virtue, must assume the greatest fortitude and resolution. For the manners to which he hath been long accustomed, are quite opposite to the new plan of conduct which he resolves to adopt ; and the force of bad habits extremely augments the difficulties which must necessarily be conquered, if we aspire to moral excellence.

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The reformation of our conduct demands heroick resolution and perseverance, for another reason; for a very melancholy one indeed; I mean, the coldness, the discouragements, which are shown to this laudable, to this glorious enterprise, by a most unchristian and inhuman world. We are naturally very desirous of the esteem of society; and the sense of their esteem ought to be warmly entertained, so far as it stimulates us to good and honourable actions. We, however, in general, court the approbation and respect of men, with too much anxiety and assiduity; if we consider that a life of virtue frees us from all dependence on their smiles and frowns; and if we likewise consider, that selfishness, vanity, imitative and erroneous judgment, are the despicable characteristics of the great majority of the human race. To the notorious villain, on whom fortune, on a sudden, lavishes her favours, they are reconciled with alacrity; a poor man struggling against

against his vices, and emancipating his mind from their tyranny, they slowly and reluctantly, and never heartily forgive. The slaves to fashion, and to trifles, seem, in *one* instance, to envy their neighbour the acquisition of what is truly valuable; the acquisition of virtue. His approaches to wisdom seem to reproach their adherence to folly. All fair *appearances* of amendment of life, ought to be accepted and recompenced with the visible rewards of the affection and good offices of mankind. Then, what zealous regard, what distinguished honours ought we to confer on *him*, who gives evident and repeated proofs of a virtuous reformation! Yet many a sincere and diligent penitent, by the cruel and unreasonable obstinacy of his acquaintance and pretended friends, in declining to restore to him their society and esteem, hath again yielded to the allurements of vice, to which he hath never renewed his serious resistance, from a fatal despondency. Few, very few can
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prosecute a great and arduous plan, while it is opposed by the frowns and aversion of the world. And surely it demands consummate magnanimity, serenely and firmly to advance, according to the series of our system; to go on from strength to strength; to bring our operations to maturity and completion, while we find our country a desert, or an inhospitable region. Surely it demands a vigour and refinement in virtue and piety, which are hardly attained by an adept, but are unattainable by a novice in practical Christianity, to be impassive to all irregular emotions from those objects which press upon the senses; and to fix our principal enjoyment, our most lively hopes, our only confidence of happiness, in immaterial and invisible beings; in our mind and in God!

So unforgiving, so unfeeling are we, not only to those who have directly offended us, but likewise to those unhappy persons, who, perhaps, as far as they have been misruled by the impulse of the heart,

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have

have only been their own enemies. And yet, with this barbarous and implacable disposition, we pretend to be the disciples and the followers of the mildest and most humane of all teachers and exemplifiers of righteousness. We pretend to be the followers of *Him*, who is particularly careful in his exhortations, to warn his hearers against a hasty and uncharitable judgement and condemnation of the conduct and fate of their neighbours: of *Him*, who asked them who told him of Pilate's massacre of the Galileans, while they were sacrificing at the altar, whether they thought *that those Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things?* Nay, added he, *but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* Or *those eighteen, upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, and slew them; think ye that THEY were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?*—I tell you, nay; but except YE repent, ye shall all likewise perish; Luke, ch. xiii, v. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. We harbour in our breast an irreconcilable

concileable resentment against a brother who hath committed a trespass against us, perhaps by no means of the first magnitude; yet, we will allow that we ought to obey, and surely we cannot plead, that we do not understand, the following answer of our Saviour to Peter, when he asked him, *how oft his brother should sin against him, and HE forgive him; till seven times? I say not unto thee, said Christ, until seven times; but until seventy times seven; Mat. ch. xviii, v. 21, 22.* In the New Testament, how completely is the amiable, the benevolent, the expanded spirit of Christianity, guarded and enforced! It flows again in St. Luke with equal fullness and energy. *Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him; Luke, ch. xvii, v. 3, 4.* We are unwilling to forgive a neighbour who has been

guilty, perhaps, of no very great offence against ourselves or the publick; and yet we boldly, we blasphemously arrogate the sacred appellative of Christians: we arrogate the honour of being called after *Him*, who said to the woman that had been taken in the very act of adultery, when she was left by the Scribes and Pharisees; *Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? She said, no man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her; neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more;* John, ch. viii, v. 10, 11. Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from all uncharitable conduct, that most horrible iniquity.

Permit me still to deviate a little more from a direct attention to my text, by observing, that when I asserted that virtue is in general, rewarded in this world, I mean not to exclude the striking exceptions to the remark. Many good men are, through life, unfortunate here below: many, with regard to absolute number; few,

few, I hope, relatively to the number of those whose existence on earth is, in the main, pleasurable, and even happy, from the practice of virtue. The exceptions, however, ought never to be suppressed; on the contrary, they should be brought forth, and set in the strongest point of view. Otherwise we may seem to join with the voice of an obdurate and merciless world; who are eager to catch at any plea that may excuse them from relieving, from compassionating the necessitous and the distressed. Poverty, in the judgement of our amiable fellow-creatures, is criminality. A man's low estate (especially if he is distinguished by strength of intellect, and by the ornaments of the mind) such a man's *low* estate, is *high* treason against the community.

I must beg your excuse for having so long digressed from my subject; which, however, I have not forgotten, and to which I shall therefore now return. The digression, I am sure, you will pardon; for it

proceeded from a heart, warm in the defence of virtue and humanity. *Not my will, but thine be done*, were the words on which I began to discourse. I have endeavoured to shew, that, as prudent men, as men of the world, it is our interest to bear adverse events with serenity and firmness. And I hope, my arguments and representations of facts, were not totally foreign to my text, if, while I reminded the immoral man, that he had no reason, on account of his calamities, to exclaim against fortune, or to murmur against Providence, I proposed to him the only way by which he could remove those calamities; a reformation of his life. I hope I did not altogether desert my text, by exhibiting to him the obstacles, the difficulties which he *had*, and *ought* to surmount, in prosecuting his virtuous amendment. For by convincing him that he himself had been the cause of most of the evils that distressed him, and by recommending to him a change of manners,

as the only cure of his evils ; I inculcated to him the strongest motives to bear those evils well, by acting in the best possible manner, after his past obliquity of conduct : and the topicks by which I represented to him the arduous task of his reformation, tended to display the propriety of the whole natural and moral constitution here below ; and, consequently, perswaded him to be reconciled to those general laws ; to those prevailing causes and effects, which determine our sublunary state. Thus, I flatter myself, I was teaching him, though, perhaps, too digressively and diffusely, practically to acquiesce in what it hath pleased the Supreme Being to establish or to permit ; to adopt a sentiment similar and parallel to that of our Saviour in the text ; *not my will, but thine be done.*

I have attempted to prove, that we ought, merely as prudent men ; as good politicians for this world, to bear our misfortunes with calmness and fortitude. I

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shall now proceed to show, how much more clearly and emphatically it is our duty to bear adversity with serenity and resolution; if we consider ourselves as moral agents; as beings endowed with the principles of natural religion; as beings who are seriously accountable to man; but more seriously and awfully accountable to God, for our conduct.

All the prudential reasons why we should bear the evils of life with tranquillity and resolution, operate on the mind of him who believes and reveres the divine œconomy: but he is armed with a constancy of soul by nobler motives; by a proper estimate of all terrestrial good and evil; by resignation to the will of the Deity, and by a strong and bright hope of a happy immortality. He sees, with gratitude and adoration, that celestial wisdom and goodness have appointed the grievous ills, the permanent woes, which, in general, originate from vice; and the substantial advantages; the durable pleasures, which

which commonly flow from virtue, in the present world. His heart burns within him, with a sensible and truly philosophical piety; while his mind expands and ascends; while, with larger and more elevated thought, he contemplates and admires this harmonious and beautiful providence and arrangement; while, by the awards which are dispensed to the good and bad, in this transitory sphere of our existence, he is taught, that the satisfaction of the former, while they are on earth, is congenial, is amicably, and intimately connected with their bliss in Heaven; and the practice of virtue, here, with the purer and sublimer employments of the mind, in it's more refined and exalted state.

Hence, if he hath received a competence from the bounty of his Creator, he is contented and happy. He feels no want of the luxuries and parade of life; of those extravagant supernumeraries which puzzle the will; which embarrass, and load, and often

often destroy the man. Therefore, if these objects are withheld from him, he can, without any trying effort of his piety and resignation, say, *thy will be done*. For many of the constituents of virtue's felicity are obtained without money; and the dearest of them are of easy purchase. The virtuous man is only obliged to do all the good to mankind that is in his power; what he wants for himself is so little, that he almost carries about with him the supplies of his perishable frame. His intellectual requisites; the objects to which his soul is attached; with which his soul is delighted; I mean virtue and knowledge, are equally moveable: indeed, they principally dwell; they center in his own breast; and they yield a life, an activity, a nature, and a zest of pleasure, comparatively with which, all the joys that wealth procures, are only so many species of torpor and stagnation. If friendship exists upon earth, he has the best title to friends, and will most probably

bably find them ; for a friend is not allured by the elegance and glare of externals ;—*they* only captivate the fawning and contemptible associates of vanity.

Such a man as I am describing, is far from repining that he possesses not a splendid fortune. If, in the eye of reason and religion, we possess a sufficiency of the good things of this world ; and if our minds are well regulated ; if they are inured to good habits ; it is not in the power of riches to add much to our happiness. Even when they are well employed, the specious, the brilliant, and seducing appearances, with which they tell us that they make one man far happier than another, who is in a station of mediocrity, exaggerate infinitely on reality. For if we use them well ; if we expend them according to the dictates of conscience, virtue, and piety, the sense of the important trust committed to our charge ; and our care, and industry to acquit ourselves of that trust, with the most diffusive
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and salutary effects, bring down our happiness to a level with that of worthy characters, who have far inferior possessions.

But how dreadfully are wealth and power abused, by the far greater number of their possessors ! The wise man penetrates the surface of social and moral life. His acute and severe eye sees through the embroidered and flowery veil of gaiety and fashion ; it pervades the deformities and miseries of the great ! He sees their bodies tortured, and enfeebled by various diseases ; the effects of indolence, luxury, and excess ; he sees their minds, the domestick and private slaves of a thousand caprices and passions, engrafted by their own absurd and profane hands, on the genial stock of nature ; or he sees them, though possessed of all the powers of independence and liberty (the well-disciplined and free soul excepted) the publick and infamous slaves to every preposterous or arbitrary mandate of a court.

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When our good and reflecting man recollects these mortifying and horrible abuses of wealth and power, if his circumstances are moderate, nay even if he is poor, he is so far from envying the wealthy and the great, that he is not only ready chearfully to say, *thy will be done*, but, with a rational humility, he gives thanks to Heaven for not having raised him to a dangerous situation, in which most of us who possess that elevated ground, become dæmons in vice and woe.

As he is satisfied that no condition of life is exempted from pains and calamities, he resignedly, he gratefully accepts those evils which are inseparable even from a competence, and virtue. He knows that life is but the sleep of the animal, without contrast and variety; that it would grow dormant and sickly, without its seasonable and salubrious agitations; that there is no virtue without conflict; that he would grow ashamed of his philosophy, if he had nothing to bear.

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But if we admit what *may* be the case, that the existence of our virtuous man, our true moral agent, is darkened with a series of misfortunes; yet, he looks through the cloud of adversity; he looks through nature, up to nature's God, and feels beams of celestial and ineffable consolation. If he is disposed to repine at his hard destiny, he surveys the publick scene; observes that the best, the most enlightened, the greatest minds, are sunk in circumstances still severer than his own, and feels it presumption to murmur. He is likewise cheered by the soft, yet distinct whispers of reason, which inform him, that the human mind is deathless, like it's God; and that, by *that* Being of omnipotence, omniscience, and infinite goodness, he will be made happy *hereafter*, in proportion to the virtue with which he suffered; in proportion to his victories over affliction, *here*. The same voice continues to whisper to him, with an impression almost oracular, that in the future

ture world, all the asperities of our existence will be smoothed; all the horrible inequalities that shocked us will be no more; and that, what seemed to short-sighted and impious mortals, in their limited state, injustice, confusion, hideous deformity, will, to our enlarged faculties, and in a more extended sphere, be proved to have been a necessary and consistent part of rectitude; symmetry; perfect moral beauty; which will be completed there.

Thus, I flatter myself, I have made it evident, that even by the aid and authority of natural religion, we may, and should bear the worst calamities of life; nay, a series of it's calamities, with serenity and resolution; that we should, not only under slight and common pains and disappointments, but even under the pressure of distress, practically adopt the words of the text; and agreeably to our conduct, say, *Not my will, but thine be done.*

“ Not *my* will, which may be the consequence

“sequence of error and of passion; but
“thine, which is always infallibly deter-
“mined by reason and by truth.”

I should now have proposed to your consideration, our strongest obligations to bear the ills of life with resignation and fortitude; the precepts, and examples, and authority of Revelation. But I have already too long presumed on your attention. Therefore I shall not enter on that part of my discourse till I have another opportunity.

S E R M O N X.

ON RESIGNATION TO THE DIVINE WILL.

LUKE, CHAP. XXII. PART OF VERSE 42.

—NOT MY WILL ; BUT THINE BE DONE.

I HAVE already shown, that it is prudent in us, as good politicians, as men of *this* world, to bear our misfortunes with equanimity and fortitude ; and that it is incumbent on us ; that it is evidently our duty, to bear adversity with this habitude and temper of mind, as moral agents ; as beings who are accountable to the Supreme Being for our conduct here ; and who have a fair prospect of eternal happiness hereafter. I now come to the capital and decisive arguments, for bearing

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calamity with firmness and serenity; the laws, and the objects proposed to us by Christianity. I have reserved for the concluding part of my discourse, our strongest and clearest motives for patience and resignation. It was easy to prove, that it was our duty, as moral agents, to bear adversity like men; it was not difficult to show, that by the rules of prudence, we ought to endure the hardships of life with tranquillity; with a collected and active presence of mind. But if we really believe, and heartily embrace the Christian Religion, I need only refer you to its precepts, to its examples; to its promises and threatenings, to persuade you, watchfully and strenuously to practise the duty which I have been endeavouring to establish. I need not now urge my aim, by any minute and elaborate induction of particulars; by any accurate and severe series of reasoning. Every step that I advance; every passage to which I allude in the Sacred Writings, will evince the indispensable

dispensable duty of bearing our misfortunes with patience and equanimity.

The assurance of happiness in an eternal futurity, if we model our lives in *this* world by the laws of virtue and piety, should make the true Christian patient and resigned, under the severest dispensations of Providence. The hope of immortal felicity, on the mere foundation of natural religion, is a rational and well-grounded, but it cannot be a consistent and immovable hope: but the good Christian, in the elegant, and truly philosophical, as well as pious language of our funeral service, entertains *a sure and certain hope of eternal life*. The just and beautiful expression has been ridiculed as a contradiction in terms, by those who are as bold in impiety as they are weak in reason. But it is easier to such persons to *laugh*, than to *argue* a proposition away. The more calmly and attentively the phrase is examined, the more pertinent it will appear. We shall be satisfied, that our sure and certain hope

of a resurrection to eternal life, is a just and accurate, as well as an energetick expression; if we consider the modest and humble opinion which the best Christian ought to have of his best actions; if we consider that eternal life is an object of futurity; if we likewise reflect, that though this object hath been confirmed to us by divine revelation, *that* revelation has been conveyed to us, through many ages, by literary monuments; and that, therefore, every reasonable man admits it from it's historical evidence; an evidence, however, that is not of the rigorous and imperious nature of necessary mathematical truth; which extorts or seizes, but always compells the assent and homage of the mind, with the peremptory and incontrovertible voice of demonstration.

We are not only taught in Scripture, that we shall be eternally happy hereafter, if we lead good lives here; but that we shall be happy in proportion as our Christian manners, in our transitory state, are

are good, and exemplary, and illustrious. *Our light affliction, saith St. Paul, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

Here, we are told, that our transient and sublunary afflictions (undoubtedly if borne with a Christian temper) are light, in comparison with the degree of eternal bliss that we shall enjoy in a future state; and that our glory in the beatified state will be *exceeding* great; *because* we shall have received the afflictions that were sent us with patience, and resignation to the divine will. If you acknowledge the truth of this text, from St. Paul, and the truth of this comment, will you not likewise acknowledge (however harsh the acknowledgement may be to human nature) that as Christians, we ought, not only to be serene and firm under our calamities; but that we even ought to be thankful to God for them?

If we examine human nature; if we take a view of the obduracy and licenti-

ousness of the prosperous and the great ; we shall see other reasons why we should not deem adversity so great an evil as we generally make it, by our sensibility and our fears. Though the absolute inattention of those who have never known calamity, to the miseries of the distressed, would be totally incredible, were it not an object exposed to every day's observation ; yet, as all *experimental* knowledge is more substantial, and therefore, produces more substantial effects than *speculative*, we must allow, for the sake of candour as well as of truth, that it is impossible for us completely to sympathize with the evils which we have not suffered ; and therefore, that if we have not felt severe afflictions ourselves, we shall want one very strongly impelling motive to relieve the affliction of others. Surely then, a great good must result from affliction, if it only makes man humane and actively benevolent to man ; for hence it disposes, it prepares us to enjoy the pleasure of
doing

doing good ; which is, *naturally*, one of the sublimest pleasures that the human mind is capable of enjoying ;—if, for a moment, we leave that most important object, religion, out of our view.

But if we take a more extensive survey of the effects of adversity on the human mind, we shall find that it greatly contributes to the general prudence, and therefore, to the general happiness of our life. Observe the manners ; observe the madness of those who never entered the wholesome school of adversity. To escape from the stupor ; to escape from the lethargy that they feel from the continual sunshine of fortune, they fly out into caprice, into debauchery ; into a thousand shameful and ruinous extravagancies.—Without variety and contrast, man receives neither information, nor discipline, nor pleasure. By having suffered the languor and pains of malady, we feel the flush and vigour of health, through every particle of our frame ; by having struggled

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with, and conquered difficulties; by having endured and surmounted indigence; we acquire an intrepidity of soul; we are convinced how few are the wants of nature; we enjoy luxuriously our temperate and genuine pleasures; we turn our minds, from the tinsel of life, to intellect, from dissipation, to thought. Hence, the true philosopher, and the true christian, will accept adversity as a salutary bitter; as an ethereal medicine, of sovereign efficacy, sent from the Deity to mankind. For while it teaches us the true œconomy of the present life, it qualifies us for Heaven. It refines, it purifies, it exalts, it expands the human heart; it makes us true men, by doing all possible good to ourselves; it makes us Demi-Gods, by doing all possible good to others.

But let me return to the task which I assigned myself; let me enforce an acquiescence in the will of Heaven, by the authority of Scripture.

Submit

Submit yourselves to God, saith St. James, chap. iv, v. 7. Whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, (saith the royal sage of Israel) even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.——If any man suffer as a Christian (these are the words of St. Peter) let him not be ashamed but let him glorify God on this behalf; chap. iv, v. 16.——

The sense, I am sure, of these quotations, is perspicuous and indisputable. And if we really believe them to be parts of the laws of God; if we really believe that they were given to us by divine inspiration, let not our conduct be inconsistent with our belief; let us allow these sacred passages their proper influence on our practice; unless we mean to be Christians, merely in a sound; with our lips, but not in our lives.

You have heard of the patience of Job: he is one of the most eminent examples of a pious resignation to the severities of Providence, that are transmitted to us in the Old or New Testament. Great and sudden

sudden was the reverse of his life : to his extreme prosperity, immediately succeeded the most adverse events ; his immense wealth deserted him, and absolute poverty invaded him, almost in the same moment. Whilst he was flourishing in the highest health, he was instantaneously struck with most painful and mortifying disease : and agreeably to the generosity and mercy of human nature ; when he was reduced to this deplorable state, his ear, instead of hearing the strains to which it had been accustomed in his golden days ; instead of being saluted with the music of complaisance and encomium, was most unseasonably wounded with the harsh language of calumny and acrimonious disputation. His three friends, as they called themselves, who pretended that they came to mourn with him, and to comfort him, only wrangled with him, and reproached him :—and the partner of his life ; she who should have industriously applied to his pains all the lenitives of sympathy and

and consolation, was so accomplished in wickedness, that she bade him *curse God, and die.*

A more trying situation than this of Job cannot be imagined : yet, what was the tenour of his replies to all the taunts, to all the profane absurdities of the barbarous and impious people around him ? *Shall we receive good,* said he, *at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil ? Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him : till I die, I will not remove my integrity from me : naked I came into the world ; and naked shall I go out of it : the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord.* And in that remarkable passage, beginning with these words, *I am the resurrection and the life,* which makes a part of our beautiful funeral service, he alleviates his present sufferings, by prefiguring the retribution which is to be made to every man, according to his works, at the last day. But surely, the clearer and bolder prospect of that day than was
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vouchsafed to Job, should more effectually console Christians, under the most afflicting dispensations of Providence. For it is supposed by the most learned commentators on the Scriptures, that Job lived before Moses. His country, however, was remote from all communication with the Jews: consequently, he was not favoured even with the encouragements which the Old Testament proposes to it's disciples. Yet, his mind was supported; his virtue was maintained under the severest pressure of distress; by the voice of natural religion (for God left not himself without witness since the creation of the world) and by patriarchal tradition.

Let us look back to the first promulgation of Christianity; to the apostolick times. When we read some parts of the New Testament, and the early history of the Christian Church; and when we picture to ourselves the innocence, the meekness, and the more active and heroick virtues of the primitive Christians; when we likewise

wife represent to ourselves their difficulties, their distresses, their persecutions, and the barbarous deaths that they suffered, for being the noblest benefactors to mankind; the sensible mind is tortured while it peruses the excruciating pages. Shall we not then be ashamed, if we are ambitious to be, in *any* degree, the followers of those holy men; shall we not be ashamed, when we repine; when we lose all patience at the ordinary calamities of life; if we reflect, that the worst of our sufferings are far inferiour to *theirs*; and that we are infinitely their inferiours in virtue?

My sermon originated from a memorable scene in the life of Christ; and with the example of Christ let it conclude. Let him be the alpha and the omega of this discourse; as we ought to make him the motive and the end of all our actions.

At the period of his birth, his parents had travelled from Nazareth to Bethlehem, to be taxed; in obedience to an edict

edict of Augustus Cæsar. They were among strangers ; and in an uncomfortable situation. They could not even obtain a selfish reception in a paltry inn.—The Captain of our Salvation, the Prince of Peace, was born in a stable, and laid in a manger. The humble, the distressful circumstances of his birth, were emblematical of his life ; of all that he was doomed to suffer. From Bethlehem to Golgotha, we trace a series of diversified calamity. Though he was endowed, when a child, with the wisdom of the Almighty ; though he then puzzled the doctors of the law ; yet he lived in strict obedience to his earthly governours, and submitted to the hard labours, and to the poor sustenance of a carpenter. The Son of God patiently suffered all the industrious temptations of our spiritual adversary, and the famine of the wilderness. When the same divine person rose from the private citizen to the publick minister, his hardships, too, increased ; his afflictions
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became greater. When he proposed to his countrymen those celestial truths, which, if they had received them, would have ensured their temporal and eternal happiness, they returned his offers of salvation ; they returned his gentle, but pathetic eloquence, his incontrovertible arguments, his affectionate expostulations and persuasions, with obstinacy, contempt, and insolence. His benevolent sociality, his holy austerities, are equally charged upon him as crimes, by his determined and vindictive enemies ; his enemies, because he was at war with their avarice, their hypocrisy, and their ambition. If he passes his night in retirement and prayer, he is conspiring with Beelzebub against mankind ; if he converses openly with publicans and sinners, to rescue them from despair, and to win them to their true felicity ; he is immediately pronounced their equal in vice ; their accomplice in rapacity ; their companion in excess.

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I know you are well acquainted, and I hope you are thoroughly impressed with the catastrophe of this sacred tragedy.— Therefore, let me refer to it concisely : I wish not to impose upon a protestant audience, superfluous mortification. He, who was always industrious to prove, and whose life and death effectually proved, the divine inspiration of Moses and the Prophets ;—he, who was at once zealous and accurate, in fulfilling all righteousness, is publicly arraigned as a blasphemer ; he who expressly directed the Jews to render unto Cæsar the things which were Cæsar's, and unto God the things which were God's, is accused of being an enemy to the Roman state. He bears with a firm but tranquil presence of mind, the taunts and the violence of a mock-tribunal. He is sentenced to crucifixion ; he bears agony as calmly as he had borne insult ; he expires, imploring the forgiveness of those who had brought him to a most ignominious and painful death. In the

the garden of Gethsemane, and on the mount of Calvary, he is quite consistent with himself; with the great object of his mission into the world. On the former spot, he sacrificed our natural love of life; our natural abhorrence from the most excruciating pains, to the redemption of mankind. On the latter, he completed that redemption; and prayed, that it might include even his murderers. Thus, by the manner in which he expiated our sins, and particularly, by his last ejaculation to his father, he proved, that their expiator was divine. And his divinity was ratified by nature, through the voice of the Centurion.

If, while we repine at any distresses with which God is pleased to visit us, undoubtedly for our good, we recollect the painful lives and deaths, of the first martyrs to our most excellent religion, we should blush for our presumption; if we then call to mind the sufferings of our blessed Saviour, we ought to tremble for

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the blasphemy of our discontent. Let us then endeavour to transplant into our lives, the patience and resignation; let us endeavour, strenuously, though humbly, to imitate all the virtues of our great Master; whom every one who is not lost in profligacy, must admire and adore.— Let us always remember, that Christ suffered for *us*, leaving us an example that we should follow *his* steps.

And let us not, absurdly and ungratefully, be unwilling to partake of his sufferings, if we hope to be partakers of his joyful and glorious resurrection.

S E R M O N XI.
ON RESIGNATION TO THE DIVINE WILL.

LUKE, CHAP. XXII. PART OF VERSE 42.

—NOT MY WILL; BUT THINE BE DONE.

AFTER having shown you, I flatter myself, fully and satisfactorily, that it is the part of prudence to bear adversity with serenity and resolution; after having likewise proved, that this conduct is our duty, as moral agents; but still more evidently and indispensably our duty, as Christians;—two other particulars occur to me, of great moral and religious moment, which I wish, distinctly and usefully, to discuss. I am now about to undertake the critical solutions of the casuist;

not, I hope, without a proper diffidence of my abilities to discharge the task.

As the Providence of God is over all his works, and as the text inculcates an implicit and entire acquiescence in the divine will ; it may be asked, if that industry and vigilance, but more significantly, if that sollicitude and anxiety, with which we prosecute our temporal affairs, are reconcilable with our christian obligations ? Yet surely, it may be said, we are to use some care, some fore-thought : or how are we to earn a subsistence in the humblest walk of life ?—How are we properly to consult the welfare of those whom Providence hath committed immediately to our care ? And how are we to discharge the more extensive and complicated duties which we owe to our country, and to mankind ? When we are recommending, and enforcing resignation to the will of God, another difficulty may present itself to our view, the explanation of which will be of the utmost consequence to us, as citizens of *this* world ; and as
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immortal beings, who are desirous to qualify ourselves for a better, and eternal state. As our Saviour hath so expressly and repeatedly enjoined us the toleration and forgiveness of injuries, and the love of our enemies; and as we must suppose, that God, in his moral œconomy, *can* rule, and *does* rule the wills and affections of sinful men, ought we not, consistently with our belief of an all-ruling and active Providence, and with our obedience to the laws of the Gospel, not only most immoveably and passively to bear all injuries; but even to give in exchange for them, our most assiduous and generous good offices? But are we, indeed, it may be farther very pertinently and very sensibly asked, are we, indeed, to meet injuries with no resistance? Are we to punish them with no resentment, with no kind of spirited retaliation? Nay, are we to reward our enemy, for his hatred and evil deeds, with our signal friendship, with the best favours that we can bestow? But shall we

not by this conduct be quite oppressed by ill usage? Shall we not by this conduct invite ill usage? Shall we not be trodden underfoot of men, if we act thus tamely; thus absurdly, in the eye of reason? How shall we be able tolerably to subsist; how shall we be able to exist, if we practise this spiritless, this most pusillanimous and ruinous system of action towards mankind, in a world in which fraud, insolence, violence, and ingratitude, are infinitely more common than their opposite virtues?

I shall endeavour to answer both these questions accurately and completely. I shall first consider, whether a close attention to our temporal interest; whether exertion and industry in our different callings and professions; whether a system of conduct and application, which, perhaps, comprehends several future years of our lives for its developement in action, is consistent with our practice of the rules of the Gospel.

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I have no pleasure in correcting our old translators of the Bible and Testament: for it is generally, at least, the work of pedantry and presumption: it is become in *our* days, the work of dogmatical, arbitrary, and impious belief. But though I profoundly venerate the learning, the abilities, and the piety of those great men, I still more profoundly venerate the genuine morality of the Christian Religion. And we ought openly and zealously to vindicate it from the errors of the most respectable men.

We ought to be particularly masters of the sense of our Saviour's divine sermon on the Mount, because it is an abstract, or epitome of practical Christianity. Our translators make the most rational of all teachers of righteousness, bid his Disciples, *take no thought for the morrow.*—These words, agreeably to the common acceptation of the phrase, in *our* language, absolutely command us, to lead an inconsiderate and idle life; they prohibit a connected and regular attention to those

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objects that demand the serious regard of every discreet, prudent, virtuous, and wise man. But our Saviour, in the original words of the Evangelist, gives us a most useful and salutary precept; a precept, applicable to every hour of our lives; and greatly conducive to the satisfaction of every hour. The words properly translated, convey this injunction:—*Be not anxious for the morrow.* “Give not way to
“solicitude, to useless, to painful, to ex-
“tremely prejudicial care for futurity.”

In this erroneous interpretation, our translators were incorrigible*. In three other verses of the sixth chapter of St. Matthew, besides that which contains this excellent precept, they render the Greek word which expresses an anxious state of mind, by *taking no thought*, † *Be careful*

* Μη μεριμνᾶτε τὴν ψυχὴν ὑμῶν. Mat. chap. vi, v. 25.

Τὴν δὲ ἐξ ὑμῶν μεριμνῶν, &c. v. 27.

Μὴ οὐκ μεριμνησῆτε, &c. v. 31.

† Μὴδὲν μεριμνᾶτε. Philip. chap. iv, v. 6.

careful for nothing, says St. Paul to the Philippians; chap. iv, v. 6. Here the Apostle undoubtedly means—entertain not a painful care for any thing; that anxiety which corrodes life; for he uses the same word with which our Saviour warns his disciples against tormenting care, in the passages to which I have just referred. The Scripture doctrine against anxiety on our worldly affairs, which is at least very loosely and vaguely inculcated by our translators; who bid us bestow no thought on them; may be very well proved and illustrated by a remarkable direction of St. Peter, in his First Epistle. * *Casting all your care upon him*, (says he; upon the Deity) *for he careth for you*; 1 Pet. ch. v, ver. 7. In this text again, the Greek word which is translated care, signifies anxiety. And the word which expresses that paternal regard with which our Heavenly

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* Πασαν την μεριμναν υμων επιτεθεισιν επ' αυτον, οτι αυτω μελει περ υμων. First Pet. chap. v, v. 7.

venly Father careth for us; strictly means that care which reason, undisturbed by passion, gives to those objects which are worthy of it's attention. Thus we are to cast all our care upon him; or, in other words, we are to banish all our distrust, all our perplexities, all our fears, about our interest and safety in *this* world, by recollecting that there is a God, of infinite power, and wisdom, and goodness; who, as an universal Father, in the ultimate result of his moral œconomy, most kindly and effectually provides for the wants of those creatures, to whom he hath been pleased to give existence. And by the proper and thorough improvement which this passage from St. Peter holds forth to us, we shall learn, that when we have got rid of all our painful solicitude, there remains for us, to be exercised, a rational, firm, and manly attention to the necessities, the conveniencies, and the other valuable objects of life: an unclouded and pure, and, therefore, an operative

rative and efficacious attention; an attention, in *some* degree, similar in it's nature, though by no means in it's power and consequences, to the Providence of the Supreme Being; that Providence which, unembarrassed, and clear, and strong—which, modelled and determined only by celestial reason, governs the Creation.

We have now, I hope, a most important part of the true Christian's duty fairly unfolded, and accurately ascertained. We now find, that we are allowed a reasonable and chastised care for sublunary things; that we are allowed a free range of attention to the objects of this world, as sensible and prudent individuals; as good fathers of families; and as active and useful, and generous subjects of the Government under which we live. Diligence in our several callings; a vigorous attention to private and publick good; a watchful and active use of the talent, or of the talents committed to our trust, are warmly inculcated in many parts of Scripture;

ture ; and these duties cannot be prosecuted without fore-thought ; without a moral and religious care ; without various provisions for to-morrow ; without industry, on a system more or less complex ; and, therefore, less or more prescribing employment for future time. Our well-regulated nature ; or, to change my expression, *reason* and revelation, can never oppose, can never contradict each other : it is impossible for them, in a tittle, or an iota, to disagree. This is one of my postulata ; one of my axioms in theology. Can we then suppose, that the wise and benevolent Being by whom Man was framed, and who knows what is in Man ; who not only knows his weakness and his propensity to evil, but his strength likewise ; his capacity for what is good and great : can we suppose that this Being meant to chain us down to animal existence ; to the present objects of our eye ; to the images of the moment ? Can we suppose that Man was thus miserably limited by his Maker ;

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Man, who was born for the judicious, the various, and the affectionate offices of the heart; to mollify the distress of those beings, whose afflictions are partly sharpened, and partly soothed, by their intellectual nature; to promote the prosperity of a Commonwealth; to contribute to the diffusion of general happiness? Can we suppose that *He* is to take *no thought*, who can exert the most expanded, complicated, and astonishing thought? *He*, who was born to connect, to actuate, to protect, to preserve; to improve, and to polish the inhabitants of the earth, by sage and salutary laws: *He*, who was formed to anticipate remote events; to dart into the deepest abyss of time: who was destined, in unbounded imagination, or perhaps in more stupendously exact calculation, to follow the comet, and to measure the distance of the stars?

In the times, indeed, of the primitive Christians, less thought, less care, was requisite for our temporal welfare and reputation,

putation, than is necessary in *our* age. God Almighty, to show the world the nature and tendency of our religion, so disposed and influenced the minds of it's first followers; that they had all things in common; that they despised wealth and honours; and were totally devoted to pure virtue and piety. But *we* live in very different days; many circumstances which environ *us*, are, to susceptible and delicate minds, almost as alarming as *their* persecutions and martyrdoms. The arts and sciences are matured; they are of consequence in every modern Christian state: many individuals, to the cultivation of *them*, owe their support and their honours. To excell in them, much forethought is required; much extensive preparation; a culture of intellect that enlarges our being, and multiplies our prospects; all that latitude of time and space, which is seized by a laudable ambition.

But this is a fair part of the picture of modern times. There is an extreme inequality

equality in the situations of the present Christian world ; an extreme inequality in our power ; and consequently in our accommodations and enjoyment. Him, therefore, certainly we cannot justly blame, who labours to ascend *some* degrees from the bottom of the social and civil scale. Property is now guarded and secured by law ; and of the immense superfluities which are possessed by many, hardly a few atoms are granted to those in whom nature is sinking, from indigence. Surely, then, a very watchful circumspection, and very penetrating fore-thought (which, however, are consistent with serenity of mind, and with a proper trust in the Providence of God) may be allowed to the man who hath no visible means of subsisting but his own industry : surely he may be allowed, with every degree of care, except desponding anxiety, to prevent the fatal contingencies of life ; to obviate those melancholy accidents which may drive him into a workhouse, where he will

will be supported with less humanity than an ox is fed at a stall. Though we entertain a christian assurance, that God will assist our virtuous endeavours; though we entertain a christian hope of a happy immortality, when this transitory scene shall be no more; yet we must pardon, we must approve the man, who, by every honest labour, by every honest and provident art, is intent on securing independence; when we reflect, that the severe theory of Hobbes is verified, who insists, that a state of society is a state of prey; when we reflect, that from the predominance which is given to our selfish passions, man is, in general, our enemy;—that benevolence, that Christianity, is but a name.

Let me now proceed to the second question, which I proposed, at the beginning of this part of my discourse, to determine. Let us examine, by a comparison of reason, with the oracles of God, how we are to act to those from whom

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we have received real and grievous injuries. Let us examine, whether, on meeting with such treatment, we are to resist and punish the offenders ; or, whether it is required of us by christian-charity, and by a resignation to the divine will; rightly understood, to shrink, from men, to that tame, passive, vegetative being, which is shamefully exhibited for the true Christian, by weak enthusiasts, and other absurd interpreters of Scripture.

To bear the grossest injuries and affronts, with a total insensibility ; or to give the best offices that we can bestow, in immediate return for those injuries and affronts, *because* they have been committed against us, is a conduct which is equally condemned by nature, by reason, and by experience. If we are as kind to the worthless as to the good, we ungenerously and imprudently encourage the former in their bad, and discourage the latter in their laudable practices, by our undistinguishing treatment of both. Every
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individual ought to encourage and reward virtue, to the utmost of his power; and he ought, as far as he can, to check and punish vice, with a judiciously proportioned severity; for by so doing, he promotes his *private*, and promotes the *publick* security and welfare. Surely we cannot act unreasonably, nor disagreeably to the tenour of the Gospel; if, in domestick and social life, we imitate the regular administration of justice; which, though in most countries, it very impolitically, as well as immorally, omits the rewarding of virtue, is very severe in it's animadversions on vice; at least, on those vices which palpably contribute to break the bands of society. Bad hearts, and bad habits, are every day made worse by indulgence. If we are blind to the dishonesty, to the insolence, to the ingratitude of those who are dependent on us, or with whom we are in *any* way connected, those vices become gigantick; and we dilate men into monsters. I know very well, that our Sa-
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viour hath commanded us to love our enemies; to bless them that curse us; and to pray for, and do good to them that despitefully use us, and persecute us. But I am sure, that he was too good as well too wise; I am sure that he was too zealous for the extirpation of vice, to bid us love our enemies, with the foolish, doating, and destructive love of a fond parent to a child; to bid us love them in such a manner as to indulge, to embolden them in vice; and consequently to make them miserable. He could never mean that we should bless them that curse us, with our tongues; and endeavour, by our actions, to render the blessing ineffectual. And surely we cannot do good to our enemies, according to the pure and unerring doctrine of the Gospel, by retaliating the wrongs we suffer from them, in the cruelest manner imaginable; by being ten times more mischievous enemies to *them* than *they* have been to *us*; by hardening them in immorality and sin.

Nature, I flatter myself, and reason, and Christianity, conspire to strengthen and authorize my doctrine, as I proceed. If we ought to remunerate worthy deeds with our utmost benevolence, we ought to discountenance base actions; we ought to prosecute their perpetrators with private or legal punishment; for the latter as well as the former retribution, evidently tends to the good of individuals and of mankind. But when we inflict necessary and wholesome severities, let us remember that we are Christians; and let us inflict them, from truly christian motives; and consequently, with a truly christian spirit. Therefore, before we punish an atrocious offender against us, let us calmly sit down, and satisfy our hearts and consciences, that we do not meditate his punishment, and that we do not mean to carry it into effect, from a vindictive resentment against the person, but from a generous hatred against his crime; that we only mean, by fair justice,

justice, to vindicate our own rights; to amend vice by making it suffer; and to contribute as much as in us lies, to the order and peace of the community. We must be satisfied, that exclusively of our resolution to treat him as his guilt deserves, we should withhold from him no good office that we were able to perform, and that, in a distressful situation, he should require; that if he was hungry and thirsty, we should fly to give him meat and drink; and that whenever he claimed our higher regard, by the noblest of human achievements, a reformation of manners, we should be happy to reward and honour him with acts of our most enlarged and liberal benevolence. And, in all our animadversions on vice, we should take care that our censure and punishment, exceed not the nature and demerit of the offence. Indeed, there is no danger that they will be too rigorous, if we are impelled to inflict them only by our zeal for the good of the transgressor, and

for the harmony of the world. For, if in such cases we are thus actuated, we shall be as dispassionate and humane as an English jury, when they give their verdict; or as an English judge, when he pronounces sentence on an offender against the laws of his country; who feel themselves obliged to inflict rigorous penalties on a fellow-citizen; or perhaps, even to terminate his existence in *this* world, from a pure obedience to established justice and eternal equity.

Let us be particularly careful, on all such occasions, to temper the severity of the politician with the more intrinsic justice, with the more distinguishing and expanded judgement; with the godlike benevolence of the Christian. Let us warmly discriminate, when we seasonably give our opinion on the conduct of our neighbour, and when our opinion produces our action; let us warmly discriminate between the weakness and the malignity of the heart; between the deplorable effects of a fatal propensity

propensity to pleasure; and the more horrible consequences which result from a fullen, selfish, envious, and revengeful mind; between the desultory excess of passion, and the systematical depravity of the will. Let the former have all our possible tenderness and forbearance; let us pursue the latter to imprisonment, to extermination.

Our Saviour evidently enforces a mild and forgiving disposition to our enemies, in the strongest and most coercive terms; because he was thoroughly acquainted with human nature; because he knew how difficult it was to the heart of man, to subdue the baleful emotions of private revenge. To awe, to rivet the minds of those who are not enamoured with the beauty of christian virtue, he avails himself of the oriental idiom, which delights in metaphor and hyperbole. His doctrine of unconquerable meekness; his very doctrine of going two miles with him who compells us to go with him one;—of

giving him our cloak, who takes from us our coat; and of turning our left cheek to him who hath smitten us on the right; even this doctrine may be explained, by viewing his restrictive expressions in another light; and without obliging Christians, in all ages and situations, to an absolute apathy to injuries. We should recollect, as I have observed before, that as the situation of the early Disciples of Christ, and their exemplary importance in the annals of his Church, were of a singular nature and effect, a more transcendent piety, a sublimer abstraction from earthly interest and passion, was demanded of *them*, than is required of those, who are necessarily and more intimately connected with the objects of this world; who have not been favoured with the strong and indisputable inspiration of God; and who have not had ocular demonstration of the truth of their religion.

We cannot, with any plausibility assert, that we ought to adopt a totally passive temper

temper of mind to all injuries, from what we see and know of the moral œconomy of God; yet, certainly reason dictates to us, and we are certainly commanded by revelation, to imitate the moral attributes of the Supreme Being; as far as our very limited faculties will permit us; and with a just and humble sense of our many imperfections and faults. Now, I think it is indisputable almost to demonstration, from many striking instances, that the Deity is often, in *this* world, a punisher of vice, as well as a protector of virtue. These instances are easily discovered by the most candid and modest, if it be an observing and distinguishing eye. The ruthless murderer is generally pursued, apprehended, and brought to his merited destiny, by the vicegerents of his Maker. Those who have been disobedient to affectionate and excellent parents, are often unsuccessful and miserable through life. And we know it is recorded in the Sacred Histories, that God, by single acts, or by a series

series of his Providence, in several ages of the world, punished impious individuals, or nations, with the temporal effects of his displeasure. By all that I have now said, I am far from meaning to imply, that we should pronounce peremptorily and uncharitably on the visible dispensations of Providence; and that we should act with a severity proportionable to our precipitate and ungenerous language. I am far from meaning, even indirectly, to oppose the amiable theology of my great and admired poet, who prays that "*his* weak, unknowing hand, may not
"presume to throw the bolts of the Omni-
"scient and the Almighty." I would only inculcate a rational, and I hope, a truly religious doctrine; that as good men are often evidently rewarded, and the bad are often evidently punished, by the Déity, in the present life; when *we* ardently encourage virtue, and discourage vice, we act agreeably to the divine will, and to our Saviour's Prayer, by promoting the
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completion of that will ; we are the immediate instruments of our Creator's œconomy, in this world. We ought, indeed, to temper, we ought to soften our ardour against vice, with benevolence and lenity, from several important considerations ; by reflecting on our very circumscribed knowledge and judgement ; how apt we are to mistake facts and real characters :—by reflecting on the general weakness and depravity of human nature ; by recollecting our own numerous failings and trespasses ; and that we even supplicate the awful Judge of Heaven and Earth, to show that mercy to *us*, which we show to others.

Let us not, then, dishonour religion, by making it contradict reason ; by making it contradict common-sense : let us not adopt the jargon of the whining Presbyterian, or the vociferous Methodist ; but let our reason apply the various dispensations and precepts of the Old and New Testament, to their proper nations, and times, and circumstances. As the motions of the
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body are obedient to the will of the mind, so let the material and mortal letter of Scripture be flexible and elastic to it's intellectual and eternal spirit. Let us make a sensible and practical use of an observation of the illustrious Dr. Clarke; one of the most just and penetrating reasoners; one of the greatest divines; and one of the best men that ever lived.—“ All great corruptions in religion, (says he) have arisen, by separating the letter from the spirit; and in amending this fault, lies the principal efficacy of true virtue and goodness.”

It is somewhat surprizing, that a few years ago, One who had been educated in a liberal sphere of life, published a book,* in which he repeated the absurdities that I have been endeavouring to explode; in which he attempted to make the Christian Religion a Narcotick of the soul, that renders us insensible to every outrage; to all tyranny

* Jenyns's Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion.

tyranny and oppression, social or domestick, spiritual or political.

Let us not, my friends, affront the Majesty of Heaven with our unpardonable superficiality in matters of religion; by our dangerous and most reprehensible absurdities. Let us study and know the will of God, as it is elucidated by nature; as it is more largely unfolded, and illustrated in the volume of the Sacred Book, and in the volume of experience, and the world. We shall then pray, as we are directed to pray, with the understanding:—we may then, while we act well the part assigned us here; while we acquit ourselves like men, join without ignorance or presumption, in our Saviour's supplication,—not *my* will, but *thine* be done. For we are contributing as far as we can, to the completion of the will of God (as is evident, on a survey of our corporeal and mental frame) when, by all honest and creditable means, we are active in our own support and defence. Let us be assiduous and vigilant, but without anxiety, in prosecuting
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our temporal interest; for surely the faculties of man were given him for industrious and ingenuous exertion:—Let us be ardent to repress, and punish vice; but without personal resentment; for surely it is not the pleasure of the Supreme Being, whose physical, and moral, and religious laws, all most powerfully encourage and protect virtue; surely it is not the pleasure of that Being, that vice should flourish. The more consonantly we act with these rules, the nearer, in two of the main articles of our duty, shall we approach to christian perfection.

S E R M O N X I I .

PREACHED ON EASTER - DAY.

COLOSS. CHAP. III. PART OF VERSE 1.

IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK
THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE.

THERE is not, in the whole New Testament, a more striking and interesting object to Christians, than this *great* article of our belief, Christ's Resurrection. Our certainty, indeed, that he rose from the dead, essentially contributes to confirm all our evangelical faith, and our universal practice of christian virtue.—For it proves all the other miracles of our Saviour; it proves the divinity of his doctrine; and it gives us the most powerful encouragement to lead a life of virtue and piety; by assuring us, that good
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men will, one day, rise from the dead, to an eternal life of happiness and glory.—

The resurrection of Christ, and the general resurrection, are made objects of the greatest importance to us by several of the Prophets; especially by Isaiah; and yet more especially by Daniel; who gives us a very particular and strong description of the resurrection at the last day. Our Saviour himself hath made *his* resurrection, and our own, objects of the greatest consequence to us;—he often urges his triumph over death and the grave, which we this day celebrate, as an earnest of the future similar triumph of the just; as a confirmation of the divine authority by which he taught, and by which he enforced his precepts with many astonishing works; and as the strongest incitement to his Disciples to be obedient to his laws.—Hence it appears, that if the best men of the christian world had not received a personal or rational assurance of the resurrection of our Saviour, they must have inevitably

inevitably been left in a state of doubt and perplexity ; and they must have proceeded in their christian warfare, with great languor and despondency. The evils with which the first Christians were persecuted, on account of their religious profession, were as terrible as *any* to which human nature could be subjected. By propagating Christianity, they exposed themselves to the violence and implacable resentments of mankind ; they exposed themselves to tortures and to death, which they endured with fortitude and magnanimity. They could propose to themselves no earthly advantages ; no indulgence in sublunary pleasures ; no acquisition of wealth, or splendour, or dominion : their doctrine was at war with all the ungenerous prejudices, with all the inordinate passions of mankind : it prescribed a rational and collected reverence of the Supreme Being ; purity of heart and manners ; extreme temperance, industry on honest and laudable objects ; universal and active benevolence.

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It censured and proscribed a wild, savage, and destructive fever for every kind of lawless and excessive power. It was the declared and determined enemy of all tyranny, spiritual or temporal. By these restrictions, and by this active plan of conduct, were the lives of the Apostles, and of the other first Preachers of the Christian Religion, limited and modelled; the same laws governed *them*, by the promulgation of which, they excited the odium and the hostilities of the world.— And can we imagine that those martyrs to celestial truth, would have propagated and exemplified this religion, at every human hazard, if they had not been as certain of the resurrection of Christ, as that a tree beareth leaves; as that the sun shines in the firmament?

Thanks be to God, in these modern and more civilized times, it may, without presumption, be said, that we are secured from those hardships, and dangers, and torments, with which the luminaries of
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the first ages of the Christian Church were tried and approved; yet, to excell in virtue and true piety, is still an arduous task. We are apt rashly to determine, and rashly to act, from the suggestion of the circumstances of the present hour; of the objects which immediately affect and solicit our senses and our imagination. By inverting one of St. Paul's propositions, we may justly observe, that the things which are temporal, are seen; but the things which are eternal, are not seen.—And the power of the senses, which are conversant with the objects that are seen, is, in general, unfortunately stronger than the influence of reason, which bids us prefer, before all other objects, those objects which are invisible and eternal. Hence it pleased God to send down a revelation of his will from Heaven: He was pleased to impell us to virtue, and to deter us from vice, by the greatest rewards and punishments; by rewards and punishments as evident as they could possibly be made, without destroying our reasonable choice; without

destroying the morality of a good life.— Human philosophy was not sufficient to determine us to a course of virtue, and to make us consistent in that course;— the fitness and rectitude of things; the beauty of good actions, and the immediate pleasure which resulted from them to the performer, were terms and ideas insufficient to arrest and keep the soul: they were harmonious to the ear, and to the fancy; but they commonly died away in sound. They were not urged in consequence of a thorough knowledge of human nature; they did not speak distinctly, and largely enough, to our hopes and fears. But by the Christian dispensation we have complete light and direction; we are completely animated and deterred. And particularly, the certainty of our Saviour's resurrection, if we honestly embrace religion, from rational conviction, will ratify to us all the articles of our faith; and will establish our moral practice. For, without the great event
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of his resurrection, and without our belief in that event, we should, at this day (as the primitive Christians would have been affected, in the same situation) however well disposed we might be to lead a religious life, feel our minds rather in a state of astonishment, hesitation, and anxiety, than of salutary and effectual belief. We should want the great criterion of the divine origin and communication of the Gospel. And therefore, we should not be stimulated, with sufficient force, to good works ; nor should we be sufficiently deterred from immoral and impious conduct. I shall here beg leave to make an observation to the just honour of the Christian Religion. Had it wanted this great article of the resurrection of the Messiah ; this leading testimony of it's descent from Heaven ; had we thought the truth of it's history ever so paradoxical, we could never, with any shadow of reason, have accused Christ, or his Disciples, of imposture. For men were never impostors but for

some secular purposes. Frauds of all kinds there have been, and are, in the world. And I am sorry to say, that religious frauds have been varied and multiplied, to an infinite number, and to an incredible diversity of forms : nor would I express this particular concern, if men were not so disingenuous, or so precipitate, as to obtrude on us the stupid assertion, that because there are many false religions, there can be no true religion in the world. To produce a memorable example of religious frauds, Mahomet was a most notorious and successful impostor. I do not wish to make the character of Mahomet appear worse than it really was ; nor do I wish undistinguishingly to inveigh against the contents of the Koran. It has many excellent precepts of morality, which I wish that many infidels, if they *will* not be Christians, would be so far Mahometans as to practise. A man quits the standard of Christ, as soon as he deserts that of candour ; and we need have
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recourse to no railing accusation against the Turkish faith, to prove that the religion of Jesus is *celestially* superiour to the religion of Mahomet. I only meant to observe, that *he* was an impostor, from very evident reasons for imposture. Love and ambition held the empire of his soul: he was fond of sensual pleasure; and he was ardent for dominion.—Now, it is by no means surprizing, that a person who was strongly actuated with these passions, and who was likewise well acquainted with human nature, should be industrious to procure, by a pretended revelation from Heaven, the reverence and obedience of his ignorant, barbarous, and consequently credulous countrymen; that by *their* assistance, he might give effect to his schemes of conquest and of pleasure. But is it not absurd to suppose, that vice was ever diligent to promote the cause of universal virtue? Could a religion that inculcated simplicity of manners, humility, contempt of wealth, and all the self-deny-

ing virtues, be revealed and propagated by fallacious design? Could the Authour of that religion, and his Apostles, be guilty of deep and impious art, that they might prevail with mankind to practise unspotted integrity;—could they, in one most remarkable instance, be consummate villains, on purpose, that ever after the perpetration of that villainy, they might practise this unspotted integrity themselves?—The very terms, the very annunciation of these questions, proclaim and demonstrate the absurdity which they were meant to refute. Thus, even if Christ had not risen from the dead, we must, at least, have admired the morality of his Gospel, and the pure intentions of himself and his followers:—and I will venture to assert (the glorious cause for which I am pleading justifies some degree of indignation) that the man of common sense, who, after taking a serious and complete view of the lives and doctrine of Christ and his Apostles, pronounces the New Testament

Testament a system of fraud, is, himself, a most deliberate and impudent impostor.

From my preceding observations you will see, how necessary it was that the resurrection of Christ should be ascertained, to confirm the belief, and to invigorate the conduct of Christians. And hence it will appear, that the doubts and anxiety of the two Disciples who are overtaken by our Saviour in their way to Emmaus, immediately after his resurrection, were not altogether without foundation, till that event was indisputably evinced. *We trusted* (said Cleophas, one of the two Disciples) *that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to-day is the third day since all these things were done;* Luke, chap. xxiv, v. 21. We see likewise, by a comprehensive view of this subject, with what pertinence and force the following words were addressed, by a yet higher authority, by St. Paul, to the Corinthians.—*If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching*

preaching vain, and your faith also is vain.

1 Cor. ch. xv, v. 14.

Though I hope, and believe, that every one who now hears me, is satisfied that Christ rose from the dead; yet, as *his* resurrection is an object of such great importance to all good Christians, I shall beg leave to lay before you, with all possible brevity, the credibility of miracles, when they were wrought for singular and excellent purposes; and the particular and convincing evidence that we have received of the resurrection of our Saviour.

(By a miracle I here mean, a striking and visible exception to the common course of nature, effected by the immediate power and operation of the Deity. By an exception to the common course of nature, I do not mean any thing that is absolutely repugnant, or contradictory, to the order and constitution of nature, or to human reason: for such things will never be effected, even by Omnipotence itself. Of these

these pretended miracles, transubstantiation is an eminent example.

When your superficial and malignant infidels talk of the impossibility of miracles, because they deem them incredible violations of the laws of nature, one would suppose, they imagined that these laws of nature had no relation to, and were independent of the Deity: but unless nature, or the laws of nature, are terms by which we signify a universe created by God, or the established modes and rules by which he governs that universe, they are absolutely words without a meaning.— Now, if we give this distinct and rational interpretation to the words, we must allow, that it is as natural and easy for the Supreme Being, on very signal and great occasions, to depart, in some instance, from his general œconomy of the world, as it is for a human being to change his common and determined plan of conduct, on some pressing emergency. It is quite agreeable to reason, and to the analogy
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of power, to admit, that he who formed and animated man from cold and lifeless earth, may re-animate the same creature; may raise him from the dead. We are as languidly affected by the daily, but stupendous operations of the God of nature, as we are by the daily, but great benefits which from *Him* we receive. At a miracle we fall down and worship, or we cavil; on a remarkable escape from an imminent and alarming danger, even infidelity, for a moment, feels gratitude and piety. Yet our daily preservation flows as much from the goodness of Providence as the most memorable deliverance; and the rising of the sun, nay the humbler verdure with which the fields are adorned, as distinctly bespeak the power of a God, as the restoring of a dead body to life and intellect. You now, I hope, see the propriety and force of St. Paul's question to Agrippa;—*Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?*—Acts, chap. xxvi, v. 8.

But though the existence of a miracle is attended with no incredibility, we are not to suppose that a miracle is wrought, but for some very singular and salutary purpose. If the fixed laws of nature were frequently superseded and changed, the benefit of those laws would be interrupted, with destructive consequences; their harmony would be violated and confused; and we should have some reason to doubt the existence of their Authour and Preserver. But surely, of those rare examples of Omnipotence, there could not be more worthy objects than those for which Christ rose from the grave. He rose from the grave, to evince the truth of his divine mission; to affix the seal of Heaven to the precepts of the New Testament; to assure humble and governable minds, of satisfactory consolation in this miserable world, and of eternal happiness in the next.

I should now have proceeded to show you what strong historical evidence we have for the resurrection of Christ; and practically to consider

consider my text ;—but time obliges me to request your attention to what I wish to offer you on these topics, next Sunday.

S E R M O N XIII.

PREACHED ON EASTER-DAY.

COLOSS. CHAP. IIM. PART OF VERSE I.

IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK
THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE.

IN the former part of my discourse, I endeavoured to shew you the great importance of the resurrection of our Saviour to all Christians; and the credibility of those miracles which have promoted the great designs of Providence. It remains now, that I should lay before you the strong historical evidences which we have received of Christ's resurrection; and that I should practically explain and enforce the words of my text.

As the resurrection of Jesus is a most memorable and important fact, it is with
great

great strength of evidence authenticated and ascertained. Posterity are indebted, for it's fair and satisfactory historical proofs, to the inveterate enemies of Christianity. For the Chief Priests and Pharisees obtained from Pilate a watch, or some soldiers, to guard the sepulchre, and prevent his Disciples from stealing his dead body away: with the same precaution they sealed the stone that was rolled to the door of the sepulchre. The soldiers, undoubtedly, however indifferent they were about religious matters, would watch the sepulchre with all possible care, as their curiosity must have been excited by the extraordinary life and death of our Saviour. But what are human vigilance and force against the operations of the Almighty!—An earthquake ensued; the guard over the dead, became as dead men; an Angel descended from Heaven, in celestial splendour and glory; he removed the stone from the door of the sepulchre; and opened an avenue to his Lord's triumph

over

over death and corruption. This illustrious event is recorded by all the four Evangelists, who were contemporaries with the murderers of Christ; with a nation who were his obstinate and implacable enemies. Our Saviour's life, and death, and resurrection, as they are recorded in the New Testament, were so far from being contradicted by any good authority, that an account of them was sent by Pilate to Rome; where the Emperour Tiberius was so struck with the admirable and wonderful narrative, that he proposed to the Senate, to rank Jesus Christ with the Roman Deities. You will agree with me, that by thus being associated, he would not have been in very honourable company: yet the anecdote shows, how irresistably amiable, and divine, the character and miracles of our Saviour must have been, when they so deeply impressed the mind of a most obdurate and licentious tyrant.

I shall now take a view of my text more immediately, and as it relates to our prac-

tice. *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above.* The word *then* refers to the preceding chapter, in which the Apostle had reminded the Colossians, that as they were buried with Christ, dead and buried, with him, from sin, they ought to rise, with him, from the mortal corruption of sin; nay, even from the ceremonies and partial righteousness of the Mosaic law, to purity of life; to true holiness; to active and enlarged piety.

By the expression, *SEEK those things which are above*, the Apostle does not mean, that after these things we are to have a tedious or a vain search. By the help of reason, and by the complete assistance of revelation, they are obvious to every well disposed and reflecting man. By the word *seek*, he means, “that we are to be intent
“and earnest in the pursuit of those things
“which are above; that they are to be
“the ruling object of our lives.” As little doth he mean, whatever a designing or
enthu-

enthusiastick Methodist may tell you, “ that
 “ all your time is to be passed in heavenly
 “ contemplation ; in anticipating the bea-
 “ tific vision : that we most effectually
 “ please God ; that we do the essential
 “ duties required of us here on earth, by
 “ ministering very liberally to the saints (by
 “ the saints they mean themselves) by sing-
 “ ing long hymns ; and by putting reason to
 “ the penance, to the purgatory of hearing
 “ from *them*, long—what *they* will call ser-
 “ mons ; but what men of sense would call
 “ rhapsodies of vulgar and impious chi-
 “ meras.” If we came into the world to
 “ *drone*, and not to *act* ; if our lives are
 to be dissolved in religious vision, or pro-
 fituted to religious mechanism ; we may
 as well turn Methodists at once, under
 the synonymous denomination of *Regulars* ;
 we may as well shut ourselves up in mo-
 nasteries, with the sons of Dominick or
 Antony ; against the art, and superstition,
 and pomp of whose church, these very
 Methodists are continually railing, with

a strange partiality and blindness to their own absurdities and hypocrisy. For, if that moral, practical, efficacious virtue, which was the glory of many sages in the Heathen world, and which was only enlarged and exalted by the Christian system, is to be left out of religion, sermons, and hymns, and even prayers themselves, are as absolute trumpery as beads, or relicks, or the transubstantiated wafer.

These gentlemen might pretend to confute me, by telling me, that in the verse which immediately follows that from which I have chosen my text, St. Paul commands us to set our affections on things above ; not on things on the earth. I should begin my answer to their futile objection, by observing, that for want of honesty, or of understanding and knowledge ; by not properly searching the Scriptures, so as to find *in* them, and to show *from* them, the way to eternal life ; by not elegantly and perspicuously comparing scripture *with* scripture, after the masterly manner

manner of the excellent and illustrious Dr. Clarke, these Protestant jesuits, or enthusiasts, often throw the minds of their unhappy profelytes into a fatal state of delirium or distraction; set reason at war with religion; generous nature, and generous sentiment, at war with virtue and piety;—and make the word God, almost whenever they presume to quote it, give itself the lye.

St. Paul, by advising us to set our affections on things above, not on the things on earth, could only mean, that we should make the enjoyment of things above, the great aim and end of all our actions; that we should consider all our sublunary employments, and inferiour attachments, as means to obtain that supreme felicity. Consistently with evangelical rectitude, we may, nay, in obedience to direct evangelical precepts, we ought, to be industrious in that station to which it hath pleased God to call us; we ought to entertain reasonable and proper affections for our relations, for our

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friends;

friends; for mankind; and even for those pleasures which are permitted us by religion; and which are necessary to soften the fatigues and cares of life. All these objects we may love and we may pursue; this is the language of the oracles of God; which cannot, in *any* place, contradict their substantial tenour; the humane and liberal spirit which they every where breathe. But if our affection to any of these objects comes in competition with our obedience to the known will of God; to our interest in Heaven; we are to correct, we are to annihilate that affection, rather than relinquish our title to the divine favour. And by this preference and determination, we *set* our affections (we fix them principally and immutably) on things above, not on things on the earth.

He who is honestly occupied in any branch of commerce; he who holds a plough, or tends a flock of sheep, with an innocent and chearful heart, is seeking
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the things above : for he who is employed with this integrity and satisfaction, in any of these ways, is obeying the injunctions of his Maker ; whose injunctions, if we obey, I apprehend that we not only seek, but that we shall *find*, those things which are above. Be not deceived ; do not think dishonourably of God ; all *his* œconomy is uniform ; our duties to insure our interest and happiness in the next world, clash not with our true interest, with our true pleasures in *this*. God wants not *our* homage ; he hath instituted his worship for *our* sakes : all our private and public expressions of piety, if they proceed from a sincere and earnest mind, improve our present and prepare our future felicity. The happiness of the truly religious man, resembles the ladder in the dream of the Patriarch ; it is a continued ascent from the regions below ; to those above ; it's foot is on earth, it's top is in the skies.

By a misunderstanding, or misapplication of several texts of Scripture, we often are

told by the meek saints of pretended humility, notwithstanding the many examples both in the heathen and the christian world, of the noblest acquirements and virtues, that there is no merit in man. I reprobate the illiberal, I was going to say, the blasphemous idea. It is certainly very derogatory from the honour of the Supreme Being, who hath endowed us with reason and sentiment; which properties we can raise to such generous, to such astonishing exertions. We are commanded in Scripture, to lead a virtuous life; undoubtedly, in consequence of our own free choice; and with the use of our best endeavours; for if a man is made good, or bad, by an over-ruling and insurmountable impulse from the Deity; all scriptures, all laws, either human or divine, by which virtue is enjoined, and vice prohibited, are totally superfluous;—and to complete the absurdity and impiety of the supposition, God is the immediate authour of sin. *Let no man deceive you, saith St. John; he that doeth*

doeth righteousness is righteous; even as he is righteous. John's 1st Ep. ch. iii, v. 7.—
i. e. “ That man is righteous ; that man
 “ is holy and acceptable to the Lord,
 “ whose life abounds in active good
 “ works ; and he is righteous in propor-
 “ tion to the number and value of those
 “ good works. He is a righteous man
 “ who conscientiously and vigorously pro-
 “ secutes his calling, for the support and
 “ well-being of himself and his family ;
 “ and who, after he has taken proper
 “ care of these objects, like his Saviour
 “ and divine example, goes about doing
 “ good ; is ardent to befriend the human
 “ race ; and is eagerly inquisitive after
 “ opportunities to do good ;—not after
 “ the idle and malevolent tattle of the
 “ day.” This is the conduct which God
 requires, that we should voluntarily and
 steddily pursue ;—and therefore, as he
 requires it of us, he necessarily, when it
 is performed, ascribes it to our merit.
 With this virtuous ; with this truly christian
 practice,

practice, if *we* persevere in it, he will undoubtedly co-operate ; not with that striking aid, which would only produce our confidence and negligence ; but with that gentle and insinuating influence, which will improve our humility and attention ; and as a temporal reward of this christian practice, he will, likewise, unquestionably, in a still, small voice, yet in a voice which may be heard, speak peace and happiness to our minds. By this practice, on *our* part ; with this assistance of the spirit of God ; and with the powerful effects of the sufferings of our Saviour, we shall be entitled to pleasures for evermore. This, I hope, is sound and orthodox divinity, in the judgement of you all ; and I hope it is subversive of that detestable theory, which makes man a low, groveling, despicable machine, and God—a tyrant.

Therefore, let not *any* man tell you, that you are to be saved by faith, unless he means that faith which is necessarily productive of good works ;—that faith which,
through

through life, runs parallel with virtue: nor let him tell you, that you are to be saved by grace; unless he means the secret assistance of the spirit of God, co-operating with *your* strenuous and unremitting endeavours; or unless he means by grace, what is often meant by that expression in Scripture; the dispensation of the New Testament, in opposition to the Jewish law; or to the systems of human philosophy. Nor yet let him tell you, that you are to be saved by the merits of Christ, unless he means that the merits of Christ will amply atone for those failings, and faults, and sins, which (as no man liveth and sinneth not) will be blended with the excellencies of the brightest characters; provided that the essence and substance of our lives are, genuine virtue, and unaffected and rational piety.

Let me conclude, my friends, by again observing, that when we properly pursue the things below; when we act towards them, as we are morally and religiously related

related to them, we are seeking the things above;—that by thus acting, we rise, figuratively with Christ, from a spiritual death; from all the bad effects of sin, to purity of manners; to a life of virtue and true piety; and that by thus acting, we shall rise, literally, with him, from the grave, to eternal happiness and glory.

S E R M O N XIV.

ON FALSEHOOD AND VERACITY.

EPHES. CHAP. IV. PART OF VERSE 25.

—PUTTING AWAY LYING, SPEAK EVERY MAN
TRUTH WITH HIS NEIGHBOUR.

PLATO, one of the most famous of the Philosophers, or wise-men among the Heathens, in a very beautiful figure; with a noble homage to the Deity, and with a noble encomium on truth, has the following thought. He says, “ That if God
“ chose to make himself visible to mortals, he would take light for his body,
“ and truth for his soul.” And before I proceed more particularly to consider my text, I shall beg leave to observe, in the way, that both the conduct and the pens, of several celebrated Heathens, are severe reproaches to many who are undeservedly honoured

honoured with the christian name; and who, with clearer knowledge, and stronger encouragements to act well, than were afforded to the heathen world, do a great deal of mischief to society, with their writings, as well as with their actions. But what should we think of some nominal Christians of *our* days; who modestly, too, assume the garb, and the office of Ministers of the Gospel; yet strenuously and virulently oppose some of the most momentous truths of religion; deny the Divinity of their Saviour; zealously promote the cause of infidelity, and consequently of vice; and endeavour to *write down* Christianity?

It is now my business to give my text it's proper consideration. I shall therefore, in the first place, represent to you, the bad policy, the folly, the stupidity of falsehood; our well-being in *this* world only considered. I shall likewise show you the good sense, the good policy, the true *worldly* wisdom of adhering to truth, in all our words, and in all our actions.

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I shall, in the next place, endeavour to convince you, by some pertinent and strong passages from Scripture, how pleasing a sincere and honest character is to the Deity, and consequently how productive of our eternal welfare. I shall likewise, by introducing some equally applicable, and forcible passages from the Sacred Writings, convince you that the habit of lying is extremely displeasing to the Supreme Being; and therefore, extremely prejudicial to our salvation.

One reason why it is very impolitick; why it is very injurious to our interest and credit, to contract a habit of falsehood, is, that a lye framed with an intention to deceive, is commonly discovered. Therefore, in all human probability, after every deceitful lye, our aim to conceal some unjustifiable action is defeated; and by that very lye we stigmatize ourselves with the brand of infamy.

It is impossible for us not to be extremely disgusted with the false person.

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The love and admiration of the amiableness and beauty of truth, are so strongly implanted in our nature, that immediately, instinctively, without any previous reflexion, we are shocked with the moral deformity of a lye.

The good man, who hath received and entertained the impressions of religion, is still more sensibly shocked with this deformity. The mind is likewise immediately in arms against the detested liar, from the active and jealous principle of self-love. We are very allowably struck with a strong antipathy against *him* who hath, in vain, been industrious to deceive us, in a matter of great, or of small consequence; who would fain have made us appear weak and contemptible in *his* eyes, and in our own.

The habit of falsehood is, indeed, so mean, as well as base, that in a polite age and country, I feel almost an inclination to apologize for preaching against it, before a liberal congregation. But if we cast an eye back, on the substance and complexion of the Scriptures, I can never,
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I can *no where*, be out of my duty, by recommending truth, and by arguing and declaiming against falsehood. St. Paul bids Timothy *preach the word, be instant in season, out of season.* 2d Tim. ch. iv, v. 2.—It is certainly more incumbent on a Minister of the Gospel to follow St. Paul's advice, than to emulate all the false delicacy and varnish of the world.

It would be very surprizing, if it was not from long observation indubitably true, that the habit of lying grows upon us, imperceptibly and involuntarily, like other bad habits. We can easily account for the rapid progress, for the ungovernable and dreadful augmentation of any immoral habit, which is directed to the gratification of our senses; of the animal part of our frame. But what can more strongly and demonstratively evince the unaccountable, and as it were, magical power of habit, than that the habitual speaker of falsehood; the lying knave by long prescription, should, at length, to

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all appearance, lye mechanically; and without any conceivable purpose that he can effect by violating truth!—Many of us, I am sure, must have remarked, especially in our connexions with people of low station, whose minds are less instructed and fortified with good principles and good judgement, than those of better education; many of us must have remarked, that our dependents have given us false reports, on our inquiries into the merest trifles of life;—when they had not the smallest temptation to falsify;—when they had nothing to fear from an honest declaration of the truth;—and when we were at a loss to determine, whether their profligacy was more to be hated, or their stupidity to be pitied.

Almost by every new effort that the habitual liar makes, in his blundering art, that art is nearer to a total explosion. Like the poor hare, without it's innocence, and therefore, without compassion, he makes many doubles, which only render him weaker,

weaker, and accelerate his destruction. Or he may be compared with the harraffed debtor, who takes new bye-ways, to avoid the arresting talisman of justice ; and plans new stratagems, to raise fresh supplies :—But his devious haunts, and his new contrivances, only annihilate the poor remainder of his credit, and decide his ruin.

Thus, in every community, the habitual and designing liar is despised, detested, and avoided. For he endeavours to the utmost of his power, to dissolve, to annihilate truth, which is the strongest, and most sacred bond of society. And by his unrelenting and desperate practice of falsehood, he avenges the cause of mankind, and brings himself into the most abject and despicable predicament. For his habit of lying becomes, in time, so evident and notorious, that he is not believed when he speaks the truth ; even when he honestly, strenuously, and anxiously communicates something of the greatest importance to

the welfare of the person to whom it is communicated, and to his own interest. To what a humiliating and provoking kind of misery is a man thus reduced! He hath absolutely deprived himself of all the good purposes of articulation; of the use of his mother-tongue;—of the use of speech; which is of such great service to us in the daily occurrences of life, and on the most trying emergencies.

Habitual falsehood is a mark of a universally depraved mind; it is a proof of universally bad practices. The mind is, in general, natively, and constitutionally, mean and cowardly, that submits to guard it's conduct with a lye. But when a man resolutely and perseveringly multiplies his lies; when he makes lying his habitual resource in difficulties; the daily palliative and assertor of his conduct; it is evident that he must have very heinous and various misconduct to conceal. We may therefore be assured, that falsehood, especially when it becomes an inveterate custom,

custom, is an insufficient covering for a general profligacy of heart and practice ;— and that however specious the falsehood may be, like a fair and elegant sepulchre, while it conceals a total internal corruption, it points you directly to it's mansion.

Divines, in treating of falsehood, generally divide it into different kinds. This division I do not think necessary ; for it is pure, absolute falsehood ;—it is falsehood itself with which *I* am at war, without regard to it's particular application. Thus they animadvert on the wanton, or as some people mis-term it, the *innocent* lye ; on the busy lye ; and on the malicious lye. Now I think that we should hold truth so sacred, that we ought not, in conversation, to indulge ourselves even in the sportive and amusive lye. True religion and morality have nothing in them austere ; but that gravity and restraint, which answer substantially good purposes, and which prevent considerable evils, ought always to be respected, and ought always to be

practiced. The confines of the region of vice are dangerous ground; by giving way to a propensity to speak light and trivial untruths, we may proceed in falsehood, till we venture on gross and mischievous lies. As to those reports (even when we know them to be true) which are prejudicial to our neighbour's credit and happiness, we have no moral and christian right to contribute, in the least degree, to *their* circulation, unless we are called upon to give a faithful account of them, by publick or private justice.—But if we frame a *false* report, to his disadvantage, and propagate it industriously, we are guilty of a compound and atrocious crime.—In this conduct, falsehood, injustice, malignity, and barbarity, are involved. It needs no censure; no comment; for it shows itself, at once, in the genuine and striking form of a dæmon.

I now come to the agreeable part of my discourse. I shall now endeavour to show you the good sense, the good policy; the
great

great and infinite advantages of a conscientious and strict adherence to truth.

If we have done an action to offend, or even, in *some* degree, to injure any person, our surest way to prevent the bad effects of that action, is an honest and humble confession of the truth. This is the obvious and simple resource of artless sincerity; and all the refinements of a statesman, hackneyed in the ways of men, and in all the involutions and evolutions of perfidy, could not form one more effectual. By such an ingenuous acknowledgement of a fault, the resentment of the generous and the good is immediately disarmed and destroyed; and it is succeeded by esteem and love. This gentle sincerity hath in it so insinuating a force, that it even checks and softens the revenge of the obdurate and the impetuous.

Every virtue hath it's immediate and palpable advantage. By making a constant attention to veracity one of the golden rules of our life, we keep our minds clear

of much anxiety and perplexity. We are free from the painful fear that our falsehoods will be detected; we need not rack our minds with many machinations, to prevent our lies from clashing with one another; to make them all appear consistent and harmonious. The track of the liar through life is rugged, dark, and uncertain; he is often bewildered on a gloomy heath. The path of the truthful man is smooth and easy; and it lies through a pleasant country: it is refreshed with verdure, and enlivened by the sun.

If notorious falsehood is a mark of a universally bad mind, as I have already particularly observed, it would be absurd elaborately to prove, that to be tenacious of truth, in all our dealings with the world, demonstrates a thoroughly good character. He who is a slave to villainy and his senses, lies habitually; because he has much to conceal, and much to apprehend, from justice, and from the resentment of the world. The man whose life is actuated
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by benevolence and purity, always speaks the truth; for he has nothing to conceal; he has nothing to fear.

I shall now consider, in a religious view, our great obligations to be strict observers of sincerity and truth; and our extreme folly and perverseness, in practising falsehood and deceit.

God never meant that revelation should supersede natural religion; much less did he mean, that it should contradict it. He only intended, that the sentiments and arguments, that spoke distinctly and forcibly for the existence of a Supreme Being; for the amiableness and beauty of virtue, and our indispensable obligations to practise it; that urged the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and of a future state of rewards and punishments;—he only intended, that these sentiments and arguments, with which he had endowed the human breast from the creation of the world, should be improved, completed, and established by Christianity. But nature,

ture, and reason, and experience, the first directors which God gave to the human mind, unanimously and powerfully concur, in giving their suffrage to the moral rectitude of truth: and they clearly pronounce, and severely condemn, the moral obliquity of falsehood. The man of sincerity, then, will always receive the highest approbation and praise; and the liar must always expect the rigid sentence he deserves, at the bar of *natural* religion.

To quote all the pertinent and decisive passages of revealed religion, which express God's very strong approbation of truth, and his extreme disapprobation of falsehood, would be to transcribe a great part of the Old and New Testament. I shall select a few from a thousand.

The Deity is frequently stiled, in Scripture, with a particular emphasis, the God of Truth.—*The Lord is a God of truth*, says Moses; Deut. chap. xxxii, ver. 4. *Thou hast redeemed me*, says the Psalmist,
O Lord,

S E R M O N XIV. 33ⁱ

O Lord, thou God of truth; Pf. xxxi, v. 6.

As if truth was one of the most excellent attributes of God; and most warmly recommended to the imitation of man.—

O Lord, my God, saith David, thou art become exceeding glorious; thou art clothed with majesty, and honour! Pf. civ, ver. 1.

In this magnificent praise of the Deity, *honour* is the highest ascent in the climax; the riveting point of the eulogium. And what is honour, but the purity, the perfection of truth? Our Saviour singled out Nathanael from the crowds of his followers, as an object, on account of his honesty and veracity, the most worthy of his divine commendation. The apostrophe is beautiful, and strong; it's simplicity charms the heart; and it's propriety and force, strike and convince the mind. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him; *Behold an Israelite, indeed; in whom is no guile*; John, ch. i, v. 47.—As if he had said; “this is a man
“ of simplicity, honesty, and truth; he is a
“ true

“ true Israelite ; he deserves to be counted
 “ one of the people of God.”

Be ye wise as serpents, says the same teacher and exemplifier of all virtue and piety ; *be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves* ; an excellent, prudential, as well as religious precept. We cannot be too circumspect and cautious in our conduct ; we cannot be too observing of the ways of mankind, in a designing and barbarous world : and we *may* be extremely prudent, and wise, and great adepts in the knowledge of mankind ; and yet, we may be, and ought to be, inoffensive and honest : for innocence and falsehood are incompatible ; while innocence and truth go hand in hand.

Be ye perfect (says our Saviour) *even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect* ; Mat. chap. v, v. 48. It seems surprizing, that Christ should bid frail man be as perfect as his Maker. But if we take a view of the context from which these words are taken, we shall immediately discover their

their practicability as well as beauty. He introduces them immediately after he had inculcated universal and active benevolence;—the love of foreigners; of our enemies; of all mankind. It would be the highest absurdity in us, to think of imitating the more majestick and awful attributes of God; we cannot thunder with a voice like his; we cannot clothe the fields with verdure; we cannot command the trees to blossom; nor can we create and govern planetary systems:—but if we are heartily determined to lead a life of virtue, and piety; we may, with the divine assistance, which will never be refused to good dispositions, subdue our passions, forgive injuries; and as Omnipotence doth all possible good to mankind, *we*, too, may do them all the good that can be effected by our limited power. Thus may our benevolence be pure, or perfect, even as that of our Father which is in Heaven is perfect.

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So with regard to truth; we cannot know so many truths as are known to the Deity; nor can we, like him, infallibly distinguish truth from falsehood: but as he ever adheres to truth, in the utmost extent, and with the utmost accuracy; we may practise it to our best knowledge, and judgement, fully and with precision; and thus likewise, in this instance of righteousness, we may copy the perfection of our heavenly Father, in quality, though not in degree.

The denunciations against falsehood, in Scripture, are many, and severe. *The Devil is a liar* (saith our blessed Saviour) *and the father of lying*:—John, chap. viii, v. 44. He, then, who resolves on the practice of falsehood and deceit, evidently deserts from the banner of Christ, and lifts himself under the standard of the Devil.

What reward (says David) *shall be given or done unto thee, thou false tongue! Even mighty and sharp arrows, with hot burning coals.* Ps. cxx, v. 3. By the figurative expressions

expressions of mighty and sharp arrows, with hot burning coals, the Prophet shows us, that habitual falsehood is very displeasing to God ; and that it will be punished in a very exemplary manner, in a *future*, if not in the *present* state.

The mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped, says the same Royal Prophet. Psalm, lxi. v. 12.

This denunciation against liars, hath sometimes, by the just and alarming judgement of Providence, been fulfilled in the literal sense. Ananias and Sapphira, for *their* sacrilegious lye, were, on the very spot on which it was uttered, not only immediately struck dumb, but dead ; Acts, chap. v, v. 5, 10. Against every habitual liar, however, this denunciation is very properly accomplished, in the metaphorical or figurative signification : for no stress is laid on what he says ; no credit is given to his most articulate and solemn assertions : and whether it is a greater evil ; whether it is more mortifying, to have the

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use of our language, or the *belief* of our language, *stopped*, I shall leave every person who hath a sense of honour; every one who hath sentiment, and a proper spirit, to determine.

May the tongues of all here, be ever mute to falsehood and deceit; and ever distinct and explicit to sincerity and truth!

S E R M O N XV.

AGAINST RELIGIOUS ENTHUSIASM.

2 COR. CHAP. XIII. PART OF VERSE 5.

EXAMINE YOURSELVES, WHETHER YE BE IN
THE FAITH; PROVE YOUR OWN SELVES.

THE expression, *to be in the faith*, admits of two senses. It may either signify our assent to the Christian Faith, after having examined it with our reason; or, it may signify our conscientious and steady obedience to the Christian Religion, in consequence of that assent.

I shall consider the text in each of these senses.

Though religion is the most important object that can engage the mind of man; and though, bad as the age is, there is a considerable show of it in the

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world;

world; we may be surprized, if we reflect how superficially we treat it, in point of consideration and reflexion. As we take the fashion of our cloaths from the country in which we live, without thinking or disputing; we as heedlessly take our religion; what ought to be the well-formed and well-adjusted garment of our minds. I am sorry to observe, that we are Church-men, or Presbyterians, or Anabaptists, because our ancestors were of *such* a persuasion. In business of any consequence with *men*, we are generally very provident and attentive:—but with regard to the articles of the great account which is to be settled between God and us, we are shamefully remiss and negligent.

Reason was, undoubtedly, the first governing principle instilled into man by the Deity, in whom resides the fountain and perfection of reason. By this principle, he is to be watchful to regulate every part of his conduct; and therefore, certainly, by the guidance of this principle, he

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is to accept and practise the Christian Religion. If our religion is not proposed to our consideration and choice, as to rational creatures, God Almighty might as well have proposed that religion to the animal creation, or to stocks and stones.

But to this doctrine, an objection, seemingly strong, may be made. At this rate, you will say, very few people can profess and practise Christianity on a proper foundation. How can they who are to earn their bread by their daily labour, have time for this deliberate and extensive use of their reason? How can *their* poor and stunted education qualify them for such discipline? None, it may be thought, can properly examine themselves, whether they be in the faith; can prove their own selves, except men of great learning and abilities.

This supposition I deny. The excellence of that part of Christianity with which we are chiefly concerned; of the practical part of Christianity; of christian

morality (however profanely the word may sound in some enthusiastick ears) this part of our religion is level with the meanest capacities. It is indeed absolutely necessary, in a well ordered community, that there should be publick preachers of Christianity, properly warranted and established; to remind their countrymen of those awful truths, which, amidst the business and pleasures of life, we are too apt to neglect; to illustrate Scripture, by bringing it's different material passages into a comparative view; and to enforce the leading tenets of Christianity, by strong, but plain arguments. But our great christian duties every man ought, and is able to consider;—the farmer as well as the priest; the peasant as well as the philosopher.—Every man of common sense, if he sits down to think seriously (I do not require of him a severe stretch of thought) must know, and approve the excellence of those objects which are recommended to our practice by our Saviour. Every man
must

must be satisfied, that temperance and industry are extremely conducive to his well-being and happiness; that they secure his health and subsistence; and the esteem and respect of the world:—and he must be equally satisfied that their contraries, that intemperance and idleness produce the contrary effects; that they bring him to diseases, want, and infamy. He must be as easily convinced, that benevolence keeps his mind quiet and serene; promotes the happiness of his fellow-creatures around him; and must be well-pleasing to the Father of Mercies; to the God of all comfort. If he thinks coolly and deliberately, must he not likewise be convinced, that publick and private worship are absolutely necessary to cherish the strength of virtue; an awful sense of our dependence on our great Creator; and to qualify us for receiving the assistance of his Holy Spirit in the performance of our good works?—Nay, the same reflecting person, though unlearned, though untutored in the schools,

will see the reasonableness and propriety of some of the less perspicuous parts of our religion :---he will see that it was worthy of the wisdom, and justice, and goodness of God, to send his Son into the world to die for mankind ; that we might learn, that no atonement from us could expiate our transgressions ; that the odious nature of sin might be fully demonstrated to our minds ; that we might be humble and grateful to Heaven, for the inestimable mercy of the new covenant ; and that we might be industrious to lead a life of virtue and holiness ; a life in *some* degree worthy of that blood by which we have been redeemed.

As to absolute mysteries ; the manner of the incarnation of the Son of God, for instance, and of the existence of the ever blessed Trinity ; it is folly and presumption in *any* man to suppose, that he can ever be acquainted with *them*. We are humbly to assent to these great truths ; to accept and believe them, as God has been pleased

to reveal them; but we must not pretend to comprehend their nature and their essence. Indeed we cannot reasonably suppose, that the Deity would have been so inconsistent with himself; with his consummate and uniform wisdom, as to lay mysteries before us, particularly and minutely, which he had not given us force and extent of mind to understand.

Whatever, then, in our religion, is properly called *Mystery*, is hidden from all human eyes. But practical religion; that religion with which we have principally to do, is sufficiently to all good purposes, intelligible to the most illiterate ploughman; he may understand it as well, I was going inadvertently and absurdly to say, as the Pope; which would, indeed, have been a very bad compliment to an honest and sensible ploughman; for most of the Popish doctrines are destructive of reason and true religion.

But however intelligible and clear are the precepts relating to our duty, we all

ought often to give them a serious consideration; hence we shall see their fitness and their beauty in a more striking light; and hence we shall be the more powerfully encouraged and excited, to practice what we seriously approve and admire.

God certainly intended (whatever artificial and impudent enthusiasts may tell you to the contrary) that religion should be tried by the test of reason.—St. Paul, you know, reasoned *concerning righteousness, temperance, and judgement to come*; and I am sure none here are so stupid, or so profane, as to compare St. Paul with an ignorant, vile methodist preacher. But why need I quote the authority of St. Paul to recommend the use of reason, in matters of religion? God himself warrants us, by reason, to confirm revelation.—By the mouth of the Prophet Isaiah, he offers to argue with the Jews, on the excellence of *his* laws, and on the singular obstinacy of *their* disobedience.—*Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord.* Isaiah, ch. i, v. xviii.

I now

I now naturally and regularly proceed to consider the second sense of the expressions *to be in the faith*; and that sense, I told you, was our conscientious and steady obedience to the Christian Religion.

Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord, saith St. Paul. Heb. ch. xii, v. xiv. And we shall very widely mistake the Apostle's application of the term, if we imagine that he meant it should merely signify external piety; an enthusiastick contemplation of the Deity, without good works; without an active and virtuous conduct; to promote and establish which conduct, is the great end of all true religion. The meaning of the word holiness, in the text which I have now quoted, may be proved by the use of the same word by the same Apostle, in another place. St. Paul, after advising the Thessalonians to avoid too great an indulgence in sensual pleasure, and to avoid the commission of fraud, adds these words: *for God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness*; 1st Thess. chap. iv, v. 7.

“ Not

—“Not to those actions which weaken
“and corrupt the mind, and injure our
“neighbour; but to those actions which
“strengthen and purify the soul, and spread
“happiness around us.

To inculcate this practical righteousness,
is to obey the voice of nature, of reason,
and of the corresponding oracles of God;
and it ought to be particularly recom-
mended by the orthodox clergy of the
Church of England; as a set of wild or
artful spirits, still continue to unsettle and
embarrass the minds of simple and well
disposed Christians, in every corner of this
kingdom;—to lay the least stress on what
we ought to enforce with the greatest; to
skim slightly over active and moral piety,
which, unless those eminent divines, in
whose presence I should not even be worthy
to read, are egregiously mistaken, is the
essence of the Christian Religion;—and
to ring perpetually in the ears of a congrega-
tion, the word *faith*; as if it's very sound
was to operate magically; and like a talis-
man,

man, to procure their salvation. Those spiritual quacks will not endeavour to save you by the regular process of a respectable physician of the soul ; but, like a less criminal quack of the body, they kill you with a charm.

If the vitals of our religion are to consist merely in faith, as it signifies a belief of revelation ; and in a confidence that the merits of Christ alone will procure our salvation ; we make the Deity inconsistent with himself ; inconsistent with his moral government of the world ; and with the laws which he hath expressly enjoined us. For if faith, and the merits of Christ, are to save us, without our active virtue, and piety, we may indulge ourselves in those vices, and we may commit those crimes, which are destructive of communities ; of that social order which (it hath been the pleasure of God from the creation) should subsist among mankind. On this supposition, likewise, the revelation of the divine will is inconsistent with itself. For, on this

this supposition, God requires of us no moral, virtuous obedience: while *that* obedience; while temperate, good, and generous conduct, is inculcated in almost every page of the New Testament. Thus, by continually preaching faith, and omitting virtue; or rather, by preaching faith in opposition to virtue, we make the Deity contradict the Deity; we make God the authour of sin, by warranting the commission of sin. How dreadful is this doctrine! And how dreadful are it's consequences!

A common and very dangerous abuse of the words, faith, and grace, could never have been made, if we had paid proper attention to the particular application of these words, in several passages of the New Testament. And the way to understand rightly that sacred book is, not to adopt heedlessly our own partial and momentary ideas; but to compare scripture *with* scripture; to prove scripture *by* scripture. Now, St. Paul, that great Apostle
of

of his countrymen, as well as of the Gentiles, in arguing with the Jewish converts, often opposes the terms faith, and grace, to works and the law; when by the two former terms he evidently means, not the mere act of the mind, of belief, nor the mere influence of the divine spirit; but the whole dispensation of the gospel, in opposition to the whole Mosaical Economy.

But let me more directly prove the momentous truth on which I have been insisting, by appeals to Scripture.—Can any man carefully read the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and afterwards imagine, that the faith by which we are to be saved, is a lazy, droning, dreaming, assent of the mind to the articles of Christianity? It is a most eloquent and beautiful chapter; and I shall beg leave to quote some of it's parts, which are most pertinent to my purpose.—*By faith, Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed;*
and

and he went out, not knowing whither he went.
 —By faith, the same Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac, his only son; accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also, he received him in a figure.—By faith, Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; chusing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.—By faith, he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the King; for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.—And what shall I say more? For the time would fail me, to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephtha; of David, also, and Samuel, and of the Prophets;—who through faith subdued kingdoms; wrought righteousness; obtained promises; stopped the mouths of lions; quenched the violence of fire; escaped the edge of the sword; out of weakness were made strong; waxed valiant in fight; turned to flight the
 armies

armies of the aliens ;—women received their dead, raised to life again ; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance ; that they might obtain a better resurrection ;—and others had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings ; yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment ;—they were stoned ; were sawn asunder ; were tempted ; were slain with the sword ; they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented ;—and then he very justly and pathetically adds——of whom the world was not worthy—Heb. chap. xi, v. 8, 17, 19, 24, 25, 26, 27, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38.

Let no man, after he hath seriously considered these verses of St. Paul, put a dangerous and impious construction on the word faith, and pretend the authority of this excellent Apostle. The heroes in faith, whom he here mentions, not only led an active and virtuous, and therefore a truly pious life, in consequence of their faith ; but encountered the greatest difficulties, dangers, hardships, and torments, when their duty called

called them to the brave encounter. They had, by no means, the great encouragements that we Christians have, to atchieve those exploits; but of *us* those exploits are not required. Shall *we*, therefore, impiously presume to think, that Christ and Faith are to do every thing for us; and that we are to do nothing for ourselves?— Shall *we*, after the resurrection of Christ hath ensured to us *our* resurrection, have recourse to despicable and profane subterfuges, from the practice of christian virtue, from the fulfilling of righteousness, which not only secures our eternal felicity, but procures our *real* happiness in *this* world; while *they*, the objects of St. Paul's high praise, with the glimmering light of prophecy, and the unwieldy discipline of the law, cheerfully submitted to every indignity, to every torment?

If we consider the whole tenour of the Gospels and Epistles, this abuse of the word faith, against which I have been endeavouring to guard you, is really as shameless

less as it is absurd. What says St. James ?
*What doth it profit, my brethren, though a
 man say, he hath faith, and hath no works ?
 Can faith save him ? If a brother or sister
 be naked, and destitute of daily food, and
 one of you say unto them, depart in peace ;
 be you warmed and filled ; notwithstanding
 ye give them not those things which are need-
 ful to the body, what doth it profit ? Even
 so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being
 alone. Yea, a man may say, thou hast faith,
 and I have works : show me thy faith, with-
 out thy works ; and I will show thee my
 faith, by my works. Thou believest that
 there is one God ; thou doest well : the devils
 also believe, and tremble. Was not Abra-
 ham, our father, justified by works, when he
 had offered Isaac, his son, upon the altar ?
 Seest thou how faith wrought with his
 works ; and by works was faith made per-
 fect ? And the Scripture was fulfilled which
 saith, Abraham believed God, and it was
 imputed unto him for righteousness ; and he
 was called the friend of God. Ye see, then,*

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how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. For, as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. James, chap. ii, verses 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26.

Can a man who recollects this passage, and such parts of Scripture, and, from the pulpit talks about nothing but faith, and grace, and the merits of Christ, pretend to be a Minister of the Gospel?

To confirm the doctrine which I have been recommending, I shall appeal to one authority more; to the highest authority that we acknowledge; to that of Christ himself.

{ *If ye love me (says our Saviour) keep my commandments;* John, ch. xiv, v. 15.—And we are fools, as well as impious, if we do not keep his commandments; for they are joyous, not grievous. How are we to *keep* his commandments? As God, by Moses, enjoined the children of Israel—

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Ye shall keep my commandments, and do them; Levit. ch. xxii, v. 31.—When we are commanded by Christ, he expects our activity; he doth not expect from us mere assenting speculation; the reveries of the doating Carthusian; but that our faith should be substantiated into virtue; that we should follow the model which *He* hath proposed to us; that we should, like *Him*, go about *doing good*.

The passage which I have quoted to you from St. James, exactly corresponds with another which I shall now cite from our Saviour himself; it may indeed be called a comment on our Saviour's passage. I shall give you the introduction to this passage, that ye may take heed whom ye hear.

Beware (saith our Saviour) of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's cloathing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.—Ye shall know them by their fruits; do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?—Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit;

*but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit :
a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit ;
neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good
fruit. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall
know them ;* Mat. chap. vii, verses 15, 16,
17, 18, 20.

Thus you see, Christ himself requires both of Clergy and Laity, that their religion should produce the fruits of righteousness ; that it should produce good works ; that it should produce good works, did I say ; nay he makes religion, vitally and essentially, to consist in good works. He insists, that by those fruits of our faith, it is proved, that we believe in him, and love him. Do you think that a pretended preacher of the Gospel, who exalts faith above our moral obedience to the Gospel, preaches that Gospel on true christian principles ?—Do you think that a pretended christian, who is continually making demure faces, and repeating the words, grace and faith, and the sufferings of Christ, and yet adorns not his life with
just

just and generous actions, is a christian on true christian principles? Then with an equal share of common sense, you may go abroad, in expectation that you will see the grape growing on the thorn, and the fig on the thistle. The Minister, who, in the general scope of his preaching, honestly recommends, and urges that just, humane, and beneficent conduct, which makes the individual and the world happy, to the utmost of it's power; and the hearer, who sincerely and strenuously practises this doctrine, may be compared with the true vine, and the true fig-tree; and we may assert, with our Saviour, that they figuratively produce their genuine and respective fruits.

Believe me, if this be not the active and generous tenour of our lives, and if we make a display of our religious pretences, we shall exactly resemble the Scribes and Pharisees of old, those notorious adversaries to Christianity, by their general

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conduct,

conduct, as well as by their persecutions. We shall only walk solemnly in robes of religion and of state; we shall only enlarge our phylacteries, and wear our frontlets conspicuous between our eyes:—we shall but love holy greetings in the market-place; we shall but tithe mint and anise, and cummin, and omit the material completions of the law:—we shall adorn the tombs of the true Prophets, whom we would have slain, if we had been their contemporaries; and to raise our hypocrisy to the most abominable extreme; but providentially, at the same time, to invite it's just retribution, we shall make our long prayers a pretence to devour widows' houses;—drawing down upon our heads the severest condemnation.

Therefore, examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves; certify yourselves, that you have given your religion the consideration it deserves; that you have weighed it's precepts in the balance of reason; and that the more you
have

have weighed them, the more you have admired their solidity and their beauty. If you find that you have been defective in discharging the duties of temperance, industry justice, and benevolence; resolve strongly, to fulfill these duties for the future; and act agreeably to that resolution. Then you may rest satisfied that your faith is good and firm; that your acts of worship will be effectually heard in Heaven:—that the grace of God, and the Spirit of God will co-operate with your endeavours, and bring you to as fair a maturity of virtue, and piety, as the infirmities of human nature will admit. In short, if you thus examine, and prove yourselves; and if you live consistently with this examination, and probation, you may rest satisfied, that notwithstanding your many infirmities, you will be approved, and accepted by the great God of Heaven and Earth; by the Judge, and Father of us all.

S E R M O N X V I .

AGAINST A VINDICTIVE DISPOSITION.

EPHES. CHAP. IV. VERSE 26.

BE YE ANGRY, AND SIN NOT; LET NOT THE SUN
GO DOWN UPON YOUR WRATH.

IN reason, as well as in scripture, there is an evident distinction between human infirmities, or failings, or faults, and those grosser transgressions, which, in the language of the Sacred Writings, and in common language, are termed sins or crimes : and this distinction we should always endeavour to keep accurately in our eye ; not that we may take to ourselves an ungenerous, immoral, and irreligious latitude of conduct ; not that we may indulge ourselves in those offences which are called failings, or faults ; while
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we abstain from the commission of sins, or crimes:—for it is our duty to keep a constant guard upon our hearts and minds, and to suppress, with our utmost power, every sentiment, every irregularity, which is disapproved and prohibited by right reason; by the written law of God;—which, in short, brings any real and permanent evil on ourselves; and is in *any* degree injurious to society. But by being attentive to the distinction between failings and crimes, we shall be the more able to judge of our own character, and of that of our neighbour; and how far the moral and religious service of each of us, will be acceptable to God. If, on a serious and thorough self-examination, we are conscious that we have discharged our duties to God and our fellow-creatures, with our best diligence;—if, on this retrospect, we find that there have been failings and faults in our conduct; but that by aspiring to a daily improvement in virtue, we have been strenuous to diminish the number of
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those failings and faults ;—that if, instead of committing those enormous vices and crimes which are every day perpetrated by the profligate and abandoned, we have felt horror, even at their very names ;—if the account of our conscience comes to this amount, we may rest satisfied, that the Supreme Judge of Heaven and Earth, notwithstanding our imperfections and faults, as no man liveth and sinneth not, will be pleased with our virtuous and spiritual proficiency, while we are here ; and will reward it in a future state. By thus attending to the useful and salutary distinction between failings and crimes, we shall likewise do more justice to the fair character of our neighbour : we shall allow him all the merit of his good actions ; of the general tenour of his manners ; and hide in friendly shades, those venial faults which he may have committed even against ourselves : for we are apt to form a very harsh estimation of the actions of another person, from a partiality to our interest ;

interest ; from a superficial knowledge of human nature ; from a general inattention to the difference between imperfections and sins ; and from a particular inattention to our own defects and transgressions.

As human laws were principally instituted for the security of property and life, *they* take cognizance chiefly of overt-acts ; and a criminal is, by *them*, often punished for a fact, in proportion as it is prejudicial to society, without any regard to the motive from which that fact originated. But in a moral and religious view ; at the bar of Virtue and of God, it is the motive, it is the cause of the fact, which determines it's complexion ; which denominates it a weakness, a vice, a crime, or a good action. Therefore, to distinguish rightly between failings or aults, and sins or crimes, is, to class with the *former*, those improper, or eventually bad actions, which we commit from inadvertency, or from the surprize of a strong temptation operating upon a strong passion ;—with the *latter*,

latter, those immoralities and impieties of which we are guilty, in consequence of the misapplication, and slow deliberation, of the reason, and decision of the will. There are crimes, indeed, of so enormous a nature, that they admit of no palliation. And christian charity can offer no apology for very bad actions, of which we are frequently guilty, however precipitately they are committed. For no man can *often* commit such actions, without having determined, by his previous calm resolutions, to lay no moral restraints on his conduct; but to give a loose rein to his licentious and violent passions.

That the leading distinction which I have proposed, between faults and crimes, is a just one, will, I think, appear from our Saviour's treatment of the woman who was taken in adultery. The account of that woman's case is a remarkable part of the Sacred History; and it here particularly deserves our recollection. I shall repeat to you the simple and beautiful narrative,

rative, as we have it from St. John.—
And the Scribes and Pharisees brought unto him, (when he was in the temple) a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, they say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act: now Moses, in the law, commanded, that such should be stoned; but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lift up himself, and said unto them, he that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out, one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last; and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lift up himself, and saw none but the woman; he said unto her, woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? She said, no man, Lord: and Jesus said unto her, neither do

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I condemn thee ; go, and sin no more. John, chap. viii, verses 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

It is reasonably conjectured by the best Commentators on the New Testament, that what our Saviour wrote on the ground, was the names of those vices and crimes of which the Scribes and Pharisees were particularly guilty ; extortion, avarice, pride, and hypocrisy. Now, the very striking scene which I have just quoted, seems to corroborate my distinction between actions which take their rise from a sudden moral weakness and strength of passion ; and those which flow from serious and deliberate thought, and from the consequent decision of the will. For we cannot suppose that even our Saviour, with all that lenity which characterized his doctrine, and his life, would have dismissed this woman so gently, after the commission of a very heinous act, if some circumstances had not attended her singular case, which greatly softened her

her guilt, and which were very propitious to the future amendment of her conduct. It is highly probable, that before this last transgression, she had been a very good woman; that her temptation was particularly powerful; and that she was already actuated with a very sincere and strong repentance. By these circumstances, an act, which is, in general, an enormous crime, was reduced to the smallest magnitude of a fault. All these circumstances Christ saw; and because he saw them, and because we may conclude, from the Divinity of his nature, that his personal interview with the woman had an effectual influence on the rectitude of her future conduct; *her* acquittal can be made no precedent for licentiousness; for our indulgence in a crime, which is treated with no less severity by the purity of the Gospel, than it was by the sentence of Moses.

I believe you will think it more than time, that I should give my text a particular

cular consideration. What I have hitherto said, however, is not, I hope, foreign to it's matter and style; but preparatory to it's easy and perspicuous explanation. It's words are; *be ye angry and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath.*

Though the Apostle begins the text with a seemingly positive command, and with the imperative mood, we must not imagine, that he absolutely enjoins us, at *any* time, to be angry. We must allow for that infinite variety of expression, which is one of the characteristicks of language. Of the precept of the Apostle, I shall endeavour to give you a plain and complete paraphrase:—"As it is almost
 "impossible that people of a warm temper
 "should not be sometimes thrown off
 "their guard, and give way to the sallies
 "of passion; take care that your passion
 "be not attended with rancorous effects:
 "repress anger as much as possible: but
 "when you *are* unfortunately angry, let
 "not your anger leave on your minds the
 B b "poisonous

“poisonous dregs of malice and revenge.
“Regret, immediately, the precipitancy
“of your temper, and let it by no means
“fettle into a fixed and most unchristian
“hatred of your neighbour. Let not the
“sun go down upon your wrath. Illu-
“minate your evening with evangelical
“love, and with atonement; and make
“not the shades of night horrid with the
“more gloomy purposes of resentment
“and malevolence.”

It is observed by a celebrated * writer, that the most generous people are naturally the most resentful. It is certain, that warmth of gratitude, and warmth of friendship, proceed from a disposition universally warm. But it is the part of reason and religion, to check our nature where it is bad; and to supply the defects of sentiment, by the strength of principle. A man of a warm and generous heart will naturally have a very quick sense of injuries; that quick sense he ought to deaden, by the superiour and nobler

* Dr. Swift.

nobler sense of his duty to God and man. And if his heart is naturally cold (for we are not the authours and modellers of our own frames) it is his indispensable duty to warm, and refine, and exalt it into gratitude, and friendship, and universal benevolence, by the use of reason and reflection; by contemplating those characters, of the heathen and christian world, that were renowned for deeds of heroic generosity; and by taking fire at the contemplation:—but particularly by recollecting the perfect example, and the expanded morality of our Divine Master.

The sincerity and liberality of disposition, for which men of a warm temper are, in general, remarkable; the humane, and friendly offices which they naturally and commonly perform, almost atone, to candour and christian charity, for the excesses of passion to which they are too subject. And here I shall beg leave to take notice of the diabolical dissingenuity; of the execrable diversion, or art of some

people, who are industrious to provoke and exasperate men of this generous, but unhappy constitution. They will throw before them those objects, by which they know that their anger will be kindled; to which they will add the most irritating object of all, an affectation of regard for their peace and welfare; either to procure themselves a most inhuman entertainment, or from a motive, if possible, yet more unjustifiable and base. A malicious person, who harbours revengeful sentiments against a man of a precipitate temper, will artfully provoke him to utter some rash expressions, or to commit some rash act, for which the other may severely punish him by law. Now, however calmly, with whatever seeming decorum the insidious traitor may behave on such an occasion, how much more odious must he appear in the eyes of good men, than the unfortunate victim to this infernal stratagem; however his aspect and manner may be deformed, for the time, by impatience

patience and indignation!—A law-suit commences; damages are given to the infinitely greater criminal of the two;—and how money can be more infamously acquired than by *this* way;—how any money can be more properly and eminently styled the wages of sin, than money thus gained, it is difficult to imagine.

But the true Christian is, on the contrary, particularly tender and delicate in his behaviour to the irascible person. He is as sparing of his neighbour's infirmity in words, as St Paul was in meats. 1st Cor. ch. viii, v. xiii. He will rather use no free, no warrantably free language, while the world standeth, than discompose his brother's temper, and make him behave in a reprehensible manner;—*than make his brother to offend*. How little strife and animosity; how much peace and harmony would there be in the world; how would the charms of society; the substantial and noble effects of true magnanimity, be diffused among mankind; if this

christian forbearance, and lenity, and benevolence, were our general practice ! The corroding jars ; nay, the ruin of many individuals would be prevented ; and the merit of the man of too inflammable a breast would not be obscured by dark gusts of passion ; he would be an amiable, bright, and dignified character !

I shall now consider the pains and disadvantages that attend a malevolent and revengeful temper ; and the pleasure and advantages which are justly the companions of the mild, and forgiving, and benevolent man.

Very agreeably and consistently with the perfect wisdom of that Great Being, all whose laws and institutions are harmonious with themselves, our good actions, are, in general, followed by their immediate pleasures ; and our vices by their immediate pains. One remarkable, and just, and natural judgement on the notoriously gloomy and resentful man is, bad health. Hatred and rancour continually

ally ferment his mind; and not only sicken the soul, but taint and corrupt the good plight of the body. Those benign juices, which would make good blood and florid health, are, by the working of the dæmon, Revenge, diverted from their proper secretions, and turn to gall and jaundice. From the particular state of his mind, we may pronounce him a complete self-tormentor. His contrivance and ingenuity are perpetually on the rack, to devise means how he may execute his vindictive designs with effect, and with impunity. Then conscience, and reason, and religion, whom, in this transitory and fallacious world, he ought to have made his comforters and his friends, are his inquisitors and his executioners: instead of being his tutelary Genii, they are the terrible phantoms of his horror and dismay!—His baleful passions urge him irresistably on; but he execrates every step that he takes; for he knows that he is advancing towards perdition.

He knows, that by the long habitude of his mind to malevolence, he is become an immediate agent of that arch dæmon who is at war with the happiness of mankind ; who is at war with the kingdom of Christ, which is the kingdom of peace. The voice of human nature ; the voice of society, with an emphatical and tremendous echo, repeat against him the verdict of his own soul ! For no man is so thoroughly detested and execrated, as the malicious and revengeful person.

It is needless for me to mention the privation of social intercourse, of social pleasures, and social benefits ; it is needless for me to mention the heavier calamities, the merciless oppression, the ruinous litigations ; nay, the attacks on life itself ; the murders which are the consequences of a rancorous and implacable disposition. In humbler life, we stab our enemy in the dark ; and like true black assassins, we dread, at least, the face of day, the instinctive indignation of mankind ; and the inexorable justice of the

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the laws. Polite and fashionable murderers, gentlemen and noblemen, as they are called, by an established abuse of terms, stab each other almost in the face of the world; under the beams of the conscious sun; for they have learned to despise a higher Being than the sun;—*his* and *their* Creator. Their whole life is a perversion of language; for their whole life is a perversion of propriety: to their tumultuous and impious fray, they prostitute two words and ideas that should ever be sacred; for they are only, in fact, the concomitants of virtue;---satisfaction and honour. Fortunately, however, for this age, which is in some respects, and in some degree civilized, our modern duels are not so destructive as the combats of more Gothic days, when whole families were butchered in consequence of a quarrel.

People in the sphere of simple, and laborious life, have advantages which they do not deserve; for they give them not their
attention.

attention. They who are honestly and usefully employed in the cultivation of the ground, are at a distance from those objects in the gay and great world, which torture the human breast with envy and ambition : the course of their life is fixed, and simple ; therefore it is easy for *them* to practise the christian virtues of social peace and harmony. The rich and the grand, with regard to laudable business, are idle ; they find themselves, indeed, full employment, by their vanity and pride ; by their love of splendour, and insatiable thirst for power. Hence they have many temptations to malignity and revenge ; to which they devote much of their time, and which they are very ingenious in gratifying, from their long converse with their companions and rivals ; who are victims, like themselves, to those tormenting passions.

If we have evinced the pains and inconveniences with which the malicious and vindictive person is justly persecuted ; the
opposite

opposite pleasures and advantages which the mild and forgiving man enjoys, are obvious and evident. His conduct is open, his mind is easy and serene; he has no dark and mischievous purposes to mature and accomplish; therefore he has no gloomy perplexities to adjust; no sentences of self-condemnation to undergo. And as the love and respect of mankind are dear to every ingenuous and reflecting person, this man enjoys that love, and that respect, in the highest degree. For though every branch of practical christianity entitles us to, and procures us the esteem of our neighbour, yet no part of virtue so effectually engages the affection and regard of our acquaintance, as a truly benevolent temper, and habit of acting.

If we can act so agreeably to the noble doctrine of the Christian Religion, as not only to forgive the person who hath injured us, but to do him a good office when it is in our power, by this generosity on *our* part, two very beneficial effects are produced

produced in *his* mind. For, if he has any feelings in his soul, which do honour to human nature, the good we return to *him*, for the evil with which he hath treated *us*, is a very severe and salutary reproof to him, for his injurious behaviour. Likewise, if he hath any fair and honourable sentiments, he immediately eradicates from his breast his animosity against us, and plants gratitude and affection in it's stead. Thus, by one generous action, which, to a well disciplined mind, it is by no means difficult to perform, we punish, and perhaps reform, vice ; annihilate an enemy ; and conciliate a friend.

Why are we eager and industrious to prosecute revenge ? That we may gratify our self-love ; that we may show our power ; that we may convince the person who hath injured us, and the public, that he who injures, or affronts us, is not to go unpunished. Now, there are wrongs which we ought vigorously to repell ; and the authours of which we ought to bring to
a publick

a publick and exemplary punishment. The wrongs to which I refer, are such as attack our life, or property, or reputation. But, in prosecuting even the persons who committed these injuries, if we consulted not only our duty as Christians; but if we wished to acquit ourselves as prudent men; as men of a sensible and proper spirit;—if we wished to maintain a true dignity of character; we should act even against *them*, merely with just and legal proceedings; not with any malevolence of heart and mind. But most of our legal processes are instituted, and most of our common modes of resentment are formed and executed, not at the indispensable and sacred calls of justice and equity; but from the violent motives of a blind and brutal self-love; a self-love which is most miserably and absurdly gratified, at the expence of its possessor's fortune, and at the far dearer expence of his tranquillity of mind; of his self-approbation. In all these latter cases of provocation and revenge,

venge, let us leave christian charity for a moment out of the question ; would you prudently consult your self-love ? Would you act like a judicious and spirited politician ? Would you obey the dictates of a noble pride ? Do you wish to appear to your adversary, and to the world, a man of consequence ; a person of great importance ? Let not idle obloquy, or petty wrongs, disturb your peace of mind : let them not divert you from your manly plan of life ; from your useful or generous pursuits ; and mislead you into the thorny labyrinths of malignity and contention. Natural insensibility is a cold, ungenerous, and contemptible quality.—That insensibility, which is acquired by virtuous discipline, is the offspring, and the strongest test of genuine philosophy ; it is the property of sages, and of heroes. Assume and display this insensibility, on the occasions to which I allude ;—show your enemy, and show mankind, that you have received from wisdom a complete
suit

suit of celestial armour, which defends you from all poisoned weapons; from all insidious machinations. If your enemy is really a bad man, this insensibility will gall him more severely than any revenge that you could inflict; and if you mean to retaliate on him an accomplished punishment, do him, for his evil offices, some signal good; and then, like the Devil, in the divine Milton, he will be cut to the heart, at the sight of serenity, of benevolence, and of love.

But while I soothe human pride, and give weight to human philosophy, let me not, for these lighter objects, forget *Jerusalem*. Let us, on every momentous occasion, recur to calm reason, and to the precepts of revelation, as to our sure and unerring moral guides; instead of thinking to play off successfully one passion against another. In our moral conduct, a reliance on the passions is precarious and dangerous; they will treat us as our northern navigators are served by our shifting and uncertain

tain European winds : they will leave us in a dead calm, when we are in need of their propitious gale ; or they will drive us from our intended course, athwart some tempestuous gulph ; or they will drown us in the bottom of the ocean. But reason and the Scriptures will be our constant and effectual friends ; they will be ready for us on every emergency. They will resemble the monsoons, those effectual trade winds of happier latitudes. They will waft us with a steady and aromattick breeze, through our commerce with life ; through a smiling and pleasant ocean, to our destined port.

I need not remind you, that a malicious and vindictive temper ; that all permanent anger, is diametrically opposite to the precepts of Christianity ; to the whole tenour of the Gospel ; to the life of Christ. The Angels, at the celestial nativity, announced to the Shepherds the character of the Messiah, and the essence of his doctrine :—*Glory to God in the highest ; and on earth,*

earth, peace ; good-will towards men ;—
 Luke, chap. ii, v. 14. Our Saviour, from the manger to the cross, gave us a complete and astonishing example of lenity, benevolence, and toleration. Even when he was expiring under a most ignominious and painful punishment, amidst the insults and taunts of his most obdurate and ungrateful enemies ; instead of calling down from Heaven, on their guilty heads, some instrument of exemplary and terrible destruction, he prayed for their pardon :—
Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.

To meditate on the life of the Authour and Finisher of our faith ; and to endeavour to imitate his forgiving and actively humane disposition, is the best use we can make of Passion-week, and the best preparation we can make for receiving the sacrament. The efficacy of that sacrament, and a proper state of mind for the participation of it, are often, and very grossly, mistaken. Let us not be confident ; nor let us be des-

ponding. Let us not imagine that the consecrated bread and wine will work like a charm, like profane magic, between God and us; and atone for great crimes, of which we never mean, properly, that is, practically, to repent. Nor let us imagine that we shall be unworthy communicants, till we have totally got rid of infirmities and faults; for if we entertain that imagination, we shall never communicate while we live. The last words of our excellent Church-catechism are, that they who approach the holy table, should be in charity with all men. This is the conclusive, substantial, and embellishing article of sacramental advice; this is principally required of them who come to the Lord's Supper; for in all the common transactions of life, and in all our religious solemnities, it is the bright and distinguishing mark of a Christian.—Our Saviour, referring immediately to the offerings under the Jewish law, but intending that the spirit of his precept should accompany his sublimer institution,

instituition, gives us this remarkable injunction :—*If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remembereſt, that thy brother hath ought againſt thee ;*—[and ſurely he hath a large account againſt *us*, if we harbour malice againſt *him* ; for in that caſe, we owe him much atonement and much love :]—*leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way ; firſt be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.* Mat. ch. v, verſes 23, 24. If, when we are going to receive the ſacrament, we aſk ourſelves this ſhort queſtion ;—Am I free from all malice ? Do I love all mankind ?—Should our hearts answer in the affirmative, we may proceed in our ſacred commemoration :—ſhould they answer in the negative, let us not profane the table of Chriſt ; let us not eat and drink our own condemnation : for the ſacrament not only typifies the death of our Saviour ; but it is meant likewiſe to typify, and recommend, and cement our benevolence. Let us then go our way ; let us be reconciled to thoſe againſt whom we harbour

any resentment ; and before we return to the altar, let us be certain that we are in charity with all men. If we come thus prepared to this memorable and beneficial rite, the blessing of God will be upon our participation of the elements ; and will make it contribute to our happiness, temporal and eternal.

To supply the great defects of my weak arguments and eloquence ; completely to show you the deformity of being angry so as to sin ; of letting the sun go down upon our wrath ; of harbouring in our minds the horrible purposes of malice and revenge ; by displaying to you the charms of a mild, forgiving, and benevolent temper and conduct, in all their lustre, I shall close this discourse with quoting a striking passage from our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount ; a passage which is fraught with his simple, and beautiful, and sublime oratory and morality.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy :
but

but I say unto you, love your enemies ; bless them that curse you ; do good to them that hate you ; and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you : that ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven ; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil, and on the good ; and sendeth rain on the just, and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye ? Do not even the Publicans the same ? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others ? Do not even the Publicans so ? Be ye, therefore, perfect ; even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect ; Mat. ch. v, verses 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48. “ Let
 “ your benevolence be pure ; let it be
 “ unmixed with hypocrisy, with partiality,
 “ with any ungenerous or malevolent excep-
 “ tions : and let it be active and universal ;
 “ let it embrace all religions ; all nations ;
 “ all mankind. Thus, in one branch of
 “ the most amiable attribute of the Sup-
 “ reme Being, you will have the unspeak-
 “ able honour to be perfect, even as your
 “ Father which is in Heaven is perfect.”

S E R M O N XVII.

AGAINST INTEMPERATE DRINKING,

ISAIAH, CHAP. V. VERSE 22.

WO UNTO THEM THAT ARE MIGHTY TO
DRINK WINE; AND MEN OF STRENGTH TO
MINGLE STRONG DRINK!

AS I am cautioned by St. Paul, my
great instructor and master in
the ministry of the gospel, not to give
offence to any one, if possible, in the dis-
charge of that ministry; and as the odious
and destructive sin of drunkenness is to be
the subject of my present discourse; be-
fore I proceed farther, I must assure you,
that I chose this subject for the edifica-
tion; for the solid and permanent ad-
vantage of us all; not from a particular
bad opinion of any individual of this con-

C c 4 gregation;

gregation ; nor from a general bad opinion of the village in which I live. Alas ! the vice of which I am speaking, is so common and so notorious over our island, that it can be no where improper for a clergyman to reprehend it, and shew it's fatal tendencies, from the pulpit. And while I am animadverting on this vice, you may as reasonably suspect that I am preaching against all the parishes of England, as against the parish of Hinxworth.

In the most material part of our conduct ; in that part of it which relates to the objects of virtue and piety, we are industrious to impose upon others ; and, what is more absurd and deplorable, we are industrious to impose upon ourselves. To evade the sacred law ; to shew, as we pretend, that some bad practice of ours is not included in certain texts of Scripture ; we have recourse to the letter that killeth, not to the spirit which maketh alive ; we fabricate some paltry gloss ; some childish
inter-

interpretation ; by which, if we cannot deceive men of sense and reflection, and totally deaden the reproofs of conscience ; we at least satisfy very weak persons ; and soften the pains of self-condemnation.— Thus, as mankind are apt to urge pretexts for their sensual gratifications ; as we are apt to sicken at the light of those truths which combat our favourite passions, and our inveterate habits ; it is by no means improbable, that a hard drinker, in one of the lower stations of life, might wave the application of my text to himself ; he might tell me, that he was not affected by its denunciation ; that it did not reach *him* ; that it was directly addressed to wine-drinkers ; that *he* was not a drinker of wine ; and he might possibly add, in the language of a Mussulman, that he never drank wine in his life. This elusion of the clown, or the porter, however futile and ridiculous, gives me an opportunity of making an important observation : an observation, which tends to evince the rectitude

rectitude and uniformity of the Creator's moral government of the world; and to excite us to the practice of virtue, by showing it's great utility, it's advantages, it's comforts, it's pleasures, even during our sublunary existence. When we apply to God any similitude, even of the imagination, the application should be made with great caution and reverence. We may venture, with a great degree of justice, to compare him with a tender, affectionate, and most judiciously benevolent father: when we attribute to him such laws as could only have been enacted to show the capricious and arbitrary exertions of power, we are guilty of great irreverence; of a great outrage against the Majesty of Heaven. He prohibits us an indulgence in all false pleasures; because, in their natural and unavoidable effects, they are destructive of our true interest, of our lasting happiness, even in *this* world. The Prophet Isaiah doth not denounce woe against those who intemperately

rately drink wine, merely because it *is* wine; because it is a liquor of a particular kind; but because excess in drinking wine produces dangerous and ruinous consequences to the person who thus abuses it's use. Wine was the common drink in Jerufalem, and in all the Holy Land; therefore, against an intemperate use of wine, the Prophet naturally and properly inveighed. Therefore you must be convinced, that all drunkenness, whatever intoxicating liquor may be it's cause, and consequently, that the immoderate use of all *strong drink* (for these words too make a part of my text) are forbidden by Scripture, as they are, evidently, by reason and by experience. Could the drinking of water have made us mad, and mischievous, or had it tempted us to drink it immoderately, some restrictions would have been enjoined us in the Sacred Writings, with regard to the use of that innocent, most useful, and healthful liquor. The nature, and the effects of that universal and
salu-

salutary fluid, however it may be despised by Bacchanalians, for it's weakness and want of spirit, absolutely seem to convey to us, with a significance more emphatical than that of language, a strong and remonstrating eloquence from the Deity. Water seems to be the drink which was principally intended for man by his Creator; it is most happily adapted to a state of nature and simplicity: it is even now, the only liquor of a great part of the world: it's taste, and it's immediate effects, tempt not to excess; and I am confident that it gives, at least, as much health and strength; and that upon the whole, it contributes to as agreeable a state of mind as what we call the more generous liquors. As God, then, gave this beverage freely to all, which, without being unpleasant, invites not to intemperance; and the effects of which are so salubrious both to the body and the mind; we may hence infer, that he commanded us, by his natural economy, and religion, to be temperate in the use of the
stronger

stronger liquors, which are cheap and common; and in the use of the richer, and more inspiriting liquors, which can only be drank by a few.

I shall now show you the bad, the ruinous effects of drunkenness;---and the good and happy effects of a life of sobriety. The effects of each of these habits are so obvious, and well-known, that I hope I shall not need to make a great encroachment on your time and attention.

One bad effect of hard drinking is, a relaxation, a languor, and indolence; a disqualification from all laudable exertion both of the body and the mind. For we are necessarily discomposed and disordered by intemperance, long before it makes it's more formidable attacks on the constitution. For though there are many, who, to the wickedness of frequent ebriety, add the folly of boasting of their strength, of boasting that they can bear an immense quantity of liquor;—that they are unacquainted with the head-ake; and that on
the

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the day after a night of hard drinking, they are as well as ever they were in their lives ;—though there are many who make this foolish boast, they know that it is a boast ; they know that they are misrepresenting their feelings ; they know that nature is not so treacherous to them as *they* are to themselves. If they have not a violent head-ake after their carousals ; if they are not in an actual fever ; they feel that they are not as they should be ; they feel an extreme difference between the hot, fiery, sun-rise that immediately succeeds their revels, and the cool, innocent, clear sensations and sentiments of a sober morning. They feel a feverishness, a restlessness ; a confusion, animal and intellectual ; a dislike of every sedate and virtuous idea ; a propensity again to quit the seat of quiet and industry, for the scenes of riot and dissipation.

But as the drunkard advances in his bad habit, from that habit still worse consequences ensue. By often repeating his
hours

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hours of intemperance, nature is at length more deeply invaded. In proportion to the violence that is done to his frame, it is relaxed and unstrung ;---excessive drinking is followed by such a dejection, by so horrible a prostration of mind, that it is a kind of antepast of death. The face of the unhappy sufferer is pale and unanimated ; he is rather a moving human sepulchre than a living man. He is loaded by his existence, from the force of habit ; and to get rid of his oppression, he has again recourse to the exhilarating, but poisonous cup.---A cup, how different from the salutary baptismal water !---It is not, like that water, a death unto life ; a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness !---No ;--it is an artificial, tumultuous, violent life, unto vices and to death ;---a life, inevitably unto temporal death ;---and as it is vice itself, and productive of vice ; if we repent not of it, so as to relinquish it, it will be likewise, inevitably, a life unto death eternal.

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He who drinks habitually to excess, to his other crimes adds the crime of suicide or self-murder. For however we may flatter ourselves with the hopes of surviving desperate cases, he cannot but know, that in the process of his hard drinking, he is gradually and certainly abridging his own life. He feels indisputable warnings of internal decay ; and his external decay must be remarked by himself, as it is remarked by his acquaintance. Now this man is undoubtedly a suicide ; and he is a more criminal suicide, than the unfortunate person who puts an end to his life by a rope or a pistol. Instantaneous self-murder is often the act of constitutional and insurmountable melancholy ; the fatal paroxysm of a malady ; and it is often committed from such an accumulation, from such a pressure of calamities, as will, perhaps, extenuate it's guilt in the eye of an all-seeing and merciful God. But what can be said to mitigate the guilt of that suicide who is murdering himself by degrees ; day
after

after day ; deliberately, wilfully ; and perhaps to avoid the persecution of no uncommon distress ;—and who aggravates the guilt of gradual self-murder, by his bad example ; by heightening that misconduct, and by multiplying those vices, which flow from habitual intoxication ; and by involving his intimate connexions in the cruel and mortifying consequences of his idleness and extravagance ; by involving them in his ruin ?—Nothing, surely, can be said, in extenuation of this man's conduct ; who brings such an aggregate of evil upon himself and others, which he might prevent by an act of manly, and very practicable resolution ?

The family distress that is occasioned by the drunkenness of the head of the family, is as deplorable as it is obvious. We see his wife and children weeping around him ; weeping for the vices of the husband and father ; weeping for the miseries which they suffer by those vices ; cold, and nakedness, and hunger. He sees their tears ; he

fees their sufferings, without a heart, and eye of compassion. Or if his execrable habit hath left any generous sentiment within him; that habit which not only brings a torpor on the organs and sensations of the body, but likewise stupifies the best feelings of the soul, that emanation of the Deity; if that habit has left any generous sentiment within him, yet it's power, it's infatuation is so great, that he will not assume force of mind enough to break it's influence; he will not sufficiently compose and purify his mind, to beg the assistance of God to co-operate with his honest and earnest endeavours, to effect his spiritual recovery. And in what a dreadful state of self-torment must that man be, who sees the distresses of his family with emotion and pain; who is conscious that he himself is the cause of those distresses; and yet whose inexorable, and remorseless passions and vices, will not suffer him to relieve them!

Let

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Let us recollect, too, that Scripture informs us, that we have a great spiritual adversary ; that the Devil goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Now drunkenness, more than any other vice, dethrones, or rather extinguishes reason, for the time ; and in it's stead, kindles in the breast a domestick war ; sets in arms against us, our passions, in all their fury ; enemies far more dangerous and destructive, than any of our external, and most malignant foes.—The watchful and prowling fiend seizes the opportunity of perpetrating our ruin ; enters into the defenceless being ; heads the gang, and drives him to perdition !—A person who is intoxicated with strong liquor, and whose passions are inflamed, as he is without reason for his guide, must likewise want the government of religion. Thus deserted, by his own fault, and thus assailed, he resembles a ship without a rudder, in a stormy sea ; and, like a ship in such distress, he may expect to be totally

destroyed ; he may expect to make a wreck both of his body and soul.

God and Religion are most illustriously merciful ; it is one of their leading characteristics, to temper justice with lenity. They are not extreme to mark what is done amiss ; or who could endure their judgment ? It may happen, that a man of great sobriety, and decorum of conduct, will be intoxicated : the best of us have our unguarded moments. Neither God, nor good men, will be severe on *him*, who, on meeting an old and dear friend, or on being informed of an event that is extremely fortunate to himself or his friend, celebrates the golden juncture with some intemperance of festivity. Indeed, he who can keep the humane, the benevolent, and the tender affections, always within the proper, the accurate, the prudential bounds, must commit actions which are worse, which are more immoral, more unchristian, than very rare, and accidental intoxication. It is not an irregular and wild fall of the heart ;

heart ; it is not a momentary ; it is not a temporary obliquity of the mind ; but it is a confirmed, and inveterate depravity of the heart ; it is a habitual, and systematical immorality of the mind, that will be punished with the condemnation of the Deity.

I think I have already observed, that an obedience to the divine injunctions, and prohibitions, will secure our real welfare, our real pleasures. The Christian Religion not only purifies and exalts our devotions, but stimulates and heightens all our substantial joys. It gives us a free range over all Elysian ground ; it only forbids us to tread where pain predominates over pleasure. Drink, and be cheerful with your friends ; it is your comfort, it is your solace ; I had almost said, it is your duty, in a world that abounds with necessary toils and cares : while you rise not above cheerfulness, your innocence, and consequently, your true enjoyment, is in your power. When you mount to noise, and tumult, you mount to an atmosphere that is dan-

gerous to the moral and social constitution; you mount to an atmosphere that is pestilential to all virtue, and consequently, to all happiness; for it is not inhabited by reason.

Need I dwell on the violent and fatal effects of drunkenness?—In what furious, in what malignant quarrels is the drunkard often engaged? Quarrels which do not subside even in the subsequent hours; in the subsequent hours, did I say?—in the subsequent years of sobriety! How often doth he lose his life, by some mortal accident that befalls him while he is intoxicated: and how often is he, in that impetuous and frantick state, the murderer of his fellow-creature!

That a man is as drunk as a beast, is a common and vulgar expression. It is, likewise, an erroneous expression; and to justify the animal creation, and to vindicate one of the ways of God to man, it deserves our particular notice and animadversion. All the brutes which, fortunately

tunately for their well-being, are separate from man, drink nothing but water ;—take no improper aliment ; commit no excess. If they were intemperate, like man, they would, like man, by being intemperate, and by many consequences of their intemperance, deviate from the laws which their Creator hath prescribed them, and embitter their existence with various misery. But those laws are as regularly and completely obeyed by them, as they are by the vegetable or the tree ; hence they have uninterrupted good health ; live, in general, to the natural period of their lives ; and enjoy as much happiness as their constitution and faculties will admit. Those animals, indeed, which have the misfortune to be intimately connected, to be domesticated with man, are often accustomed both to eat and drink very improperly and detrimentally to their welfare. By participating our luxuries, our idleness, and many destructive indulgencies invented by indolence, they contract vari-

ous maladies both of body and disposition : they grow as capricious, and petulant, and unhappy, as ourselves.

The most furious wild beast that prowls in the deserts of Africa, is not so odious an animal as the drunkard ; for he is not a rational ; he is not an accountable being. Besides, in his most horrible attacks, he acts agreeably to the unalterable, to the irresistible laws of his nature. He kills, and he tears, to quell his keenest appetite ; to appease the insurmountable rage of hunger. We know, that a human being, impelled by extremity of famine, will kill and eat his dearest friend,—and we likewise know that several quadrupeds, which are dreadful and merciless when they are famished, when their hunger is satisfied, are mild, and tractable, and generous. When the lion is not stung with hunger, he is an amiable, a great being. We have heard and read many accounts, and some of them have been well authenticated, of his memory, his gratitude, his affection,

affection, his magnanimity. So much I have said in justice, and to the honour of the animal creation, that I might with *them* contrast the drunkard, and show the deformity of his character in the strongest point of view. His outrages are not committed, from the necessary action of his nature; but from those excesses by which that nature is abused, and inflamed to madness. He is not impatient to commit deeds of mischief and destruction, from the genuine and precipitate impulse of hunger and thirst; nor from satisfying, restoring, and warrantably exhilarating his fame; but from disordering it with a shameful superfluity; from oppressing it, and driving it to violence.—The African wild beast, who is destitute of reason, fills the orbit marked to him by Heaven; the human being, who is endowed with reason, widely transgresses *his* orbit;—in a fit of intoxication, he will set fire to his neighbour's house; he will murder his friend; or he will commit
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some other shocking immorality, by having raised his natural appetites and passions to an unnatural and monstrous height ; or by the force and impetuosity of factitious passions which were by himself created.

It is needless for me particularly to describe the happy effects of sobriety.— I have shown you at large, the miserable effects of intemperance ; the advantages and blessings of sobriety are just the reverse. Sobriety keeps the body and mind in perfect vigour ; gives peace and serenity, and satisfaction ; keeps all our faculties in that strong, and collected state, which is so happily adapted to virtuous industry ; to every generous exertion and achievement ; and therefore effectually promotes our interest and reputation.

Let us always remember, to the excellent purpose of caution and circumspection over ourselves, that drunkenness is a more dangerous, a more destructive foe to our reason,

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reason, than any other vice. It dethrones reason; it extinguishes it for the time; and gradually deprives us of it altogether. Let us respect, let us reverence reason; otherwise we show disrespect; we show irreverence to God. You must remember what is written in the first chapter of Genesis.—*God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth.—So God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him.* Genesis, chap. i, verses 26, 27. It is very clear, that reason is here meant by this image of God; for it is only in consequence of reason that we have dominion over the animals; many of which are infinitely stronger, and more violent than we. The very expression, in the image of God, shows that it was with the endowment of reason that we were eminently created; and it likewise shows how highly we should regard that endowment.

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By the image of God, our *bodily* resemblance to our Creator cannot be meant ; for God is a spirit ; he hath no bodily form ; he is a pure, immaterial, intellectual substance. But well, and with proper distinction from the other parts of the creation, may our reason be called the image of God ;—as it was bestowed on us by *him*, the great source of reason ; the possessor of perfect, and universal reason ; as it gives us a characteristick excellence over all the other beings of the visible creation ; and as it makes us capable of the impressions and practice of religion ;—for without reason we should not be able to know God ; nor without reason should we be able to serve him properly ; for he requires of us a reasonable service. Some enthusiasts, or craftsmen of enthusiasm, with whom this neighbourhood is infested, would deem my present language absolute profaneness and blasphemy, though it is irrefragably warranted by Scripture ; but they are the blasphemers of God, and the profaners of his

his oracles ; who are continually decrying and abusing reason ; and who would plant it's diametrical opposite, *their* nonsense, in it's stead. St. Paul, I apprehend, was a better divine than any of them ; he argues, that is, he reasons with a logical closeness in his Epistles : he often gives high commendation to reason ; he particularly tells the people of Lycaonia, that *God left not himself without witnesses*, to those who were not blessed with a revelation, *in that he did good, and gave them rain from Heaven, and fruitful seasons ; filling their hearts with food, and gladness.* Acts, ch. xiv, v. 17.—How was this witness, this testimony of himself, by his government of the world, and by his benefits to mankind, to be properly apprehended and acknowledged, but by a thorough sense of, by serious reflection on those benefits ; or, in other words, by the exercise of our reason.

Thus, then, whatever a Methodist may tell you, by reason we are made capable
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of natural religion :—and consequently it is by reason that we are likewise qualified to receive and to obey revealed religion. Reason is the first of our faculties ; by reason we are to approve, and adopt the most eligible and interesting objects. And be assured that God is consistent, and harmonious with himself ; he could not mean that one of his beautiful, and most important works, should jar with another ; he could not mean that reason should be the permanent criterion of natural, and that there should be another, and a very different permanent criterion of revealed religion. By no means : for natural and revealed religion amicably meet and join ; and throw splendour and dignity on each other. Revelation does not annihilate ; it does not contradict reason ; it confirms, improves, exalts ; and, in matters of eternal moment, it perfects reason. Some articles of the last consequence to the virtuous and the pious, it entirely reveals ;
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they were not perceived ; or they were not ascertained by reason. Without revelation, we knew of no atonement for the sins of mankind. Without revelation, we were not certain of a future state of rewards and punishments ; though the immortality of the soul, and retributions in another life, proportioned to our conduct here, were strongly supposed and inculcated by the wise and good men of the heathen world. God forbid, that, as a minister of the gospel, or as a reasonable creature, I should undervalue revelation. To *it* we owe the improvement and exaltation of our reason ; and the certainty of an eternal and happy existence hereafter, if we are virtuous and pious here.

I shall oppose to those vehement rhapsodists a still higher authority than that of St. Paul. *Search the Scriptures*, saith our Saviour, *for in them ye think ye have eternal life* ; John chap. v, v. 39.—How are we to search them, but by rational investigation

vestigation and comparifon ?—How, from *thinking* that we have eternal life in the Scriptures, are we to be *certain* that we have eternal life there ; but by a regular procefs or afcent of our reafon, from rational opinion, up to rational conviction ? There are only two ways of fearching the Scriptures ; either by bringing them to the test of reafon ; or by turning over the leaves, and looking at the pages merely with our eyes. If a methodift had not bid adieu to reafon, I would ask *him*, which of the ways it was probable that God would recommend to man ?

I can have no doubt that the fpirit of God, in thefe days, fecretly, and in gentle whifpers, co-operates with the prayers, the thoughts, and the actions of the good. But that actual miracles have long ago ceafed, I am completely fatisfied. They are not neceffary now to promote religion. They were neceffary in the primitive days of Chriftianity ; to prove it's truth, and
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to encourage the first Disciples of Christ to bear with fortitude, the hardships and the torments which awaited their attachment to their faith. But miracles are not necessary in these times:—the truth of Christianity is sufficiently evinced to us by historical evidence, as well as by the purity and excellence of it's doctrine:—and modern Christians (thanks be to God) need not apprehend the terrible sufferings of the first. Our enthusiasts yet pretend to miracles; and the pretension is as vain as it is assuming. They insist, that a man may be certain of his salvation or damnation. Either certainty must proceed from a miraculous intervention of the spirit:—and what effects will they naturally, will they necessarily produce, but presumption and despair?

If I have rather digressed from my subject, the digression was not unconnected with my subject, and it had a noble object in view. It was in defence of reason,

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which is violated and debased by bacchanalian, and by equally injurious enthusiastick intoxication. Profoundly revere, and strictly obey the faculty of reason ; by which, from contemplating the Universe, you infer the SUPREME MIND ; by which you can approve and practise the precepts of Christianity ; by which you are honourably distinguished from all the other beings of this world ;—by which you resemble your Creator.

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